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ORIENTAL RELIGIONS.

ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

AND THEIR

RELATION TO UNIVERSAL RELIGION

By SAMUEL JOHNSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By O. B. FROTHINGHAM

PERSIA

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS is the last volume of Mr. Johnson's projected work on "Oriental Religions." The first volume, "India," appeared in 1872. An intimate friend of the author of "The Light of Asia," one familiar with his thoughts, a fine scholar himself, a student, too, in this department, speaks of it thus: "His [Mr. Johnson's] sketch of Buddha and Buddhism is one of the profoundest, wisest, justest estimates yet given." The second volume, "China," was published in 1877. George Ripley reviewed it at length and heartily in the "Tribune," praising the writer's freedom from sectarian temper, and his devotion to the interests of truth. His friend, Samuel Longfellow, noticed the book in the "Atlantic," rendering it no more than justice. Professor E. J. Eitel, of Tübingen and Hong-Kong, writing in the "China Review" of April 21, 1882, says of Mr. Johnson, whose death he is commemorating: —

"His volume on the Religions of India, which appeared in 1872, has been highly praised by Orientalists of European fame; and I make bold to say that his great work on China will commend itself to all sinologists as a most exhaustive, lucid, and correct estimate of Chinese thought and life. If it is due to Edkins to say that he has established for China her true place in philology, it is due to Samuel Johnson to acknowledge that he has fixed China's place in the history of Uni-

versal Religion. . . . If I add that Samuel Johnson's method of inquiry was thoroughly scientific, that his sympathies were absolutely cosmopolitan, while essentially religious, and that he laid down the results of his most painstaking inquiries in a style which carries the reader right along, fascinating as it is by its vivacity and sparkling lucidity, while intensely suggestive and instructive, I can but wonder that his countrymen in the United States did not give him that place among the foremost writers, thinkers, and scholars of the present day which he so fully deserves."

The Notes for the "Persia" were begun in 1877. In February, 1878, he says in a letter: "This theme is largest of all. I should call it *Iran* rather than *Persia*, but shall not. I am back among the cuneiform tablets and the sources, as I find more and more, of the religious history of the world, and especially of the great 'historic faiths.'" In February, 1880, he writes: "I get on with my 'Persia' as well as I could expect, having this winter been wrestling with the obscure and impalpable relations of Manichæism and Gnosticism with the early Christian Church. Now I am on the pleasanter track of the *Shâh-Nâmeh*, and at the doors of Sufism, etc."

How early Mr. Johnson began his Oriental studies, it is difficult to tell with exactness. It could hardly have been later than the winter of 1852–53 that he gave in Salem the lectures that were the germ of these volumes, and nearly all of the time intervening was given to some aspect of the subject. He died in February, 1882, leaving the "Persia" unfinished, yet so nearly completed that a few weeks of diligent work spent in revising, writing out a chapter on Persian poetry, adding a paragraph here and there, arranging and paging, would have sufficed to perfect his labor. The chapters are precisely as he left them. Not a line has been added or taken away. So much only has been done as the necessities of publication required, and that was done with misgiving. The chapters on Zoroaster,

Mahomet, Alexander the Great; on Babylon, on Avestan Dualism; on Manichæism and Gnosticism; on the *Shâh-Nâmeh;* the episodes on Aristotle, Cyrus, the Seleucidæ,—will interest and charm all readers; for the style is elegant, the language glowing, the sentiment lofty, and the insight keen. It seems hardly to have been a toil, so much love was in it, so absorbing a consecration. This man certainly did not labor for money, for he was poorer for all he did; nor for fame, of which he got little or none; but for truth alone, or for humanity, which can live only by truth. "The future," he wrote, "must determine whether I was justified in undertaking so absorbing a charge. I should shudder when I think of its probable doom, did I not remember that at least I have *had my reward* in the pleasure of exploring the fields into which it has called me, and in watching the flow of universal laws through history. I certainly can expect no other reward; and on the whole am glad that I cannot." How far the future will justify him remains to be seen. The reward he desired cannot, at all events, be taken away. It is, however, to be hoped that the reputation he deserved will at last be granted to him; at least, that his unselfish devotion will come to honor in the world of scholarship, so that his personal friends will not be the only ones to revere his character or admire his genius.

There is an impression that Mr. Johnson's books are of little value because he was not an Orientalist, — that is, a student of Oriental languages, who obtained his knowledge at first hand, from original sources. The truth of the assertion is frankly admitted. The writer, though he knew something of Sanscrit, was quite unacquainted with the language of China or of Persia, and had never travelled in the East. For himself, he deemed this no disqualification for his task. "I mean," he said, "to be prepared for

the evil fame of attempting so much without knowledge of the forty thousand characters of the Chinese script. If I knew these, I should know nothing else. In the way of psychological interpretation, I should be simply nothing." And again: "I am after the *law;* give me that, and I will use it where I want it. But illustrative details, except in the *actual* world of facts,—*written* details,—bore me." If the impression mentioned had been made only on the mind of the general public, it would be unfortunate; when made on the minds of critics it is deplorable. Yet even so fair-minded a scholar as Max Müller can lend countenance to this accusation. Mr. Johnson's sincerity he cordially praises, as also his honesty and accuracy. In a letter to the "Index," after Mr. Johnson's death, he pays the following tribute to the deceased writer:—

> "What I admire most in Samuel Johnson was his not being discouraged by the rubbish with which the religions of the East are overwhelmed, but his quietly looking for the *nuggets*. And has he not found them? And has he not found what is better than ever so many nuggets,—that great, golden dawn of truth, that there is *a religion behind all religions*, and that happy is the man who knows it in these days of materialism and atheism?"

This warm praise is gravely qualified by the preceding passage, which reads thus:—

> "Samuel Johnson's knowledge of Oriental religions was at second-hand; and the little accidents that must happen to an historian or a philosopher who writes on Oriental religions at second-hand are just those that most exasperate Oriental scholars. . . . There are few things in his volume on the Religion of India for which, at all events, he could not give chapter and verse, though chapter and verse may not always come from the right book."

Now nobody who knew Mr. Johnson can doubt that he was acquainted with all the books there were, and with their relative value. He indeed took the greatest pains to verify

his authorities; he consulted the five or six best Orientalists in the world, who had tried their hand at translating the literature of the Avesta, and he still complained that the versions were so unsatisfactory; his note-books show that he was familiar with Harlez, Haug, Spiegel, Darmesteter, Lenormant, Sayce, Renouf, Legge, Williams, West, the "Records of the Past," the "Sacred Books of the East," not to mention the comparatively popular volumes of Rawlinson and Max Müller. That he could have added anything in their own field to the contributions of students like these, is not to be supposed. He was able to compare them one with another, and divine the true meaning of texts where they were at variance.

As to the *right books*, scholars are not agreed. Different men will prefer different writings, according to their mental bias. Such a question is not to be decided by knowledge of a language so much as by intellectual perception, by the power to penetrate beneath the letter to the interior sense, and so to catch the genius of the people by a species of divination which discerns at a glance the real thought. This gift of insight, it is claimed, Mr. Johnson had, in extraordinary measure. As he read, — and he was an immense reader in English, French, German, — he pondered; and, in pondering, hit upon analogies that escaped more sapient breakers of stones on the road. In a letter dated May 26, 1878, he writes: "I am well along in Assyrian, Babylonian, and the rest of late Iranian discoveries. The interest of these cuneiform revelations in their bearing on Western religions, — which I find nobody, so far, among the investigators has any idea of, — is surpassing." His chief concern was to find the idea, the chain of connection; and he was never satisfied till he had found it, and fairly put his mind upon it. He may have been mistaken; but the mistake, if there was one, was intellectual rather than critical.

A more serious charge against Mr. Johnson is that of writing with a preconceived purpose to establish a certain theory about religious development and religious creeds, a fixed philosophical view, which must of necessity warp to some degree the mental and moral estimates of the systems he studies. How far the charge is just in any aspect cannot be determined. In the opinion of the present writer, it is not just to any harmful degree. The investigations were not prompted, in the first instance, by the desire to establish an opinion, but by an old interest in that class of learning. The theory was a result of the investigations; the reason, perhaps, why they were pursued as far as they were; an inspiration towards the making of these books; one explanation of the singular glow of the style that animates the pages. The theory was a cord on which the facts were strung like pearls, a connecting link between the thoughts; but it never dominated the facts themselves, or decided on the method of their selection, or put a rule on their interpretation. Occasionally the discovery of some point of view may have made him unduly enthusiastic, but the impression is sure to be corrected some pages further along, and a discerning reader can almost always make allowance for the incidental exaggeration.

Mr. Johnson's theory, — as it may as well be confessed that he had one, — at any rate was broad, large, elastic in its character. It was not sectarian, even in the widest sense of the term. There was no partisanship in it. It had the breadth of pure spirituality. The spirit of it was generous, not as being apologetic, but as being lofty and deep. The expositions are positive, and they are noble; they do not bind, but unbind; they emancipate texts, cause obscure passages to leap into light, win forth the hidden wisdom of sentences. They do not stumble or grope, they use wings and fly. There is a surprising

exhilaration in them; and although the reader may now and then demur at the rendering of a phrase, he can never accuse the author of distorting evidence, or of leaving statements out of sight.

Moreover, the charge of having a theory must rest on Ewald, Baur, Renan, the author of "Ten Great Religions;" in short on every writer who rises above the level of the commentator, exegetist, or word-monger. The historian always has a theory. Gibbon had one; Macaulay had one; Froude has one. An absolutely scientific account of anything complex is not to be looked for. Men with minds will use mind; and the use of mind cannot be had without some sort of tendency; and where there is tendency there is bias. If the theory is comprehensive enough to include all the facts, it answers every sane purpose; and if it is expansive enough to take in the foremost facts, it cannot soon be superseded. Mr. Johnson meets both conditions. He is both deep and high. To venture any estimate of his judgment of systems would be out of place here. The volumes are before the public: the critics will express their opinion of the contents as they may deem wise. But it may be safely said that not one of them will get beyond him, or will throw a dart further than he has launched his keen arrow. No living writer has reached the length of his conception, very few come near it. Even advanced thinkers are behind him. "It has cost me labor enough, that is certain," he writes to a friend; "yet it is a labor of real love, combined with an intense sense of a great demand from the side of spiritual culture and higher relations of sentiment and imagination, in the present condition of the races calling themselves 'Christian.' I hope I have done something to stimulate these forces, and help toward the grand interpretations of natural religion that are yet to come."

This volume, like the others, is saturated through and through with the religious spirit. It was written in the service of religion; not of religion as commonly apprehended, but as the best dream of the soul of Humanity of its possible attainment. It is all aglow with faith in God and with hope for man. His biographer tells us that Mr. Johnson's oration on the Class Day of 1842 "was poetic even to rhapsody;" the same language might be applied to these chapters. The writer deserves, as well as Spinoza, to be called a "god-intoxicated man." When he speaks of Law, Order, Harmony, Beauty, he rises to ecstasy. The thought enchants him; his sentences burn. This, in fact, constitutes the chief fault that is to be found in the book. Some will think the enthusiasm of faith excessive. They will quarrel a little perhaps over what seems to them an undue extravagance of eulogium in this place, and over an undue depreciation in that; over an unwarranted admiration of certain symbols, and an equally unwarranted criticism of others. But a fault of this kind is as noble as it is uncommon. And when the effect of it is to inspire one with reverence for high sentiments, it is easily pardoned. An error that enlarges the mind is very different from an error that enslaves it,— even granting that an error exists, of which we cannot be sure in this instance. Professor Eitel is of opinion that Mr. Johnson's estimate of Christianity was experimental and practical, which gave him a knowledge of its deficiencies; while his estimate of other religions, being literary, was favorable to their ideal side. Mr. Johnson's acquaintance with Eastern faiths was acquired certainly from books, but his opinion of Christianity was rather critical than experimental. At least his appreciation of its character and genius was derived quite as much from study as from observation.

Mr. Johnson was a teacher of the gospel of evolution.

I call it a gospel; for, as he received it, it was so. With materialism he had no sympathy. Such a doctrine was his abhorrence, the mark of his scorn and sarcasm. He says: —

"We who insist that there is no 'supernatural' in the nature of things, that miracle is an absurdity on its face, are called supernaturalists by men who can digest, without a sign of wonder, such irrational or preternatural notions as those of a world of phenomena without substance, of things seen and touched without a faculty beyond understanding to bridge the way from ideal to real, of a moral philosophy based solely on calculations or on observed causes and effects, and on developing the whole conception of duty out of a synthesis of consequences. . . . This contempt of reason as above understanding, of substance as against phenomena, this denial of direct or intuitive perception of realities even the most universal, is certainly the high road to materialism."

It will be seen that Mr. Johnson was a transcendentalist, and that he must have been able to reconcile transcendentalism with evolution, — two systems which are generally supposed to point in exactly opposite directions. He speaks in one of his letters of "the over-haste of science, physical and mechanical, to annihilate those sacred spaces and periods to which the personal virtues are more indebted than the times believe, for disciplines of faith, patience, and trust." To another friend he writes, in January of 1882: "You know I find no inconsistency between evolution and the original fundamental necessities of all thought, on which the transcendental philosophy is founded. . . . What do men mean to do with the *foundations* that all freedom must stand upon, — personality, progress, transcendental perception and law? These are all forgotten in petty 'crystallizations,' or else mentioned only to be abused."

The religion of Nature meant much more to him than it does to other men. "There is a spiritual 'Religion of

Nature' as well as an unspiritual. . . . There is a *vital* gladness fed by the healthful perception of the glory and beauty of God's works, and of those inner motions that shape all ways to good." The glory and beauty of these works he was never tired of exploring and interpreting. He delighted to think that mind itself, divinely as he estimated its endowment, "is evolved, not out of mere inorganic matter, but from the universe as a whole. This whole, however, is infinite, and involves inscrutable Substance, which, as recognizable only by mind, is therefore of one nature therewith. The lowest physical beginnings are thus, in virtue of the cosmic force by which they exist, actual mentalities or mental germs." This conception is at the foundation of these chapters on the ancient Iranian faith. The design of the volume, in so far as it has a design apart from the endeavor to represent things as they actually were, is to celebrate the dignity and scope of this idea, to illustrate the advent of living mind into the universe, to set forth the potentialities of the cosmos, so far as this can be done on the field of history.

Mr. Johnson's conception of Deity was peculiar, if not unique. He was not an agnostic, although he did not presume to dogmatize about the divine nature. He did not remand the thought of God to the region of the "unknowable," and then devote himself to the task of investigating the appearances of the world. On the contrary, he began with Supreme Mind, and saw evidences of its working in all visible manifestations. He was rather pantheistic, decidedly more pantheistic than theistic; but his pantheism had a human cast that brought it close to men's sympathies. The adherence to pantheism is frankly avowed. In a passage quoted from Edgar Quinet, pantheism is heartily accepted as the hope of the intellectual world; as being both vital and progressive, at once emancipating the human mind

from mental prejudice, and opening before it a boundless prospect of advance. But when charged with identifying God with man because he could not separate the two as essentially distinct existences, he pronounced the interpretation "preposterous," and maintained that as *polarities* within the divine life, man being the finite and God the infinite term, there was *eternal*, though not *essential*, distinction between them. He continues: —

"God going out of man ends man, ends God also. For what would infinite love be, so drained of its natural object? Infinite selfishness is not God. What is left for the bridge to start from, and what should it lead over to? But what if God be here already, in the nature itself that hopes, remembers, loves; that even grows by the inevitable lessons of folly, weakness, vices, crimes? By what mysterious, unfathomable energy do we live and move? The ever-flowing tides that sweep through human life, calm or terrible as character shall make them, the mysteries of good or evil, — what but these are the deeps man watches and explores, till he finds within them that transcendent purpose and eternal love which he inwardly means by the word God?"

And again: —

"The love we feel, the truth we pursue, the honor we cherish, the moral beauty we revere, blend in with the eternity of the principles they flow from; and then, glad as in the baptism of a harvest morning, expanding towards human need and the universal life of man, our souls walk free, breathing immortal air. That is God, — not an object, but an experience. Words are but symbols; they do not define. We say 'Him.' 'It' were as well, if thereby we mean life, wisdom, love. All words are but approximations; the fact, the experience, remains the same. . . . The transcendental law becomes impulse and aspiration. Stirred by its ceaseless presence, men listen to the native affirmations of Mind: I am knowledge, and the medium of knowledge; I am inspiration as well as tradition; the instant fire as well as the inherited fuel of thought; primal as well as resultant; infinite as well as finite."

This language makes Mr. Johnson's meaning clear to discerning minds. Deity, in his view, is another name for Substance, Unity, Law, Cause. The ordinary intelligence may not take in the conception, but with him it was vital, and meant a good deal more than the current theism implies. The idea exalted God as well as man; for it stripped away those accessories of personality, — or as some will say, of individuality, — which render so difficult of ideal comprehension the thought of the Absolute Being.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that this faith chilled in the smallest degree his human sympathies. On the contrary, it quickened them all, making them intense as well as spiritual. His zeal, patience, breadth, fortitude, hopefulness were in large measure due to it. The following extracts from letters to friends in bereavement show how warm it kept his heart: —

"I wish I could tell you how firmly I believe that feelings like these, so often treated as illusion, are *true*, are of God's own tender giving; that in them is the very heart of his teaching through the mystery that we call death. Our affections are *forbidden by their Maker* to doubt their own immortality. What protest they make against the destruction of what is still intensest reality to them, when all that the senses could hold by is gone forever!"

"This loving care that folds in our little lives, how near it comes when we need it most! I feel as if it held you now in a tenderness such as none of us can know, and none know how to ask for! 'The night will be light about you,' calling you to what trust-like sleep, bringing out holy eternal stars! . . . This life that has been with you so long, close within your own, must still be yours. . . . Soon may the infinite motherly love make the heavens open where they are most darkened now, and the angels descend on your saddened home!"

"I know how much your sister has been to you. . . . And now it will all be spiritualized and made part of your *eternal* life. And you will know how to reap its still, ripe harvests, and to make them cheer and refresh a world that needs nothing so much as spiritual faith."

"I learn that the gentle sufferer who has so long been made happy

by your devoted care has been called into those interior spheres where indeed the calmness and sweetness of her spirit have already seemed to you to be dwelling as in its constant home. Out of your mortal sight, but still in the arms of your unchangeable trust and love. There, too, her home."

And such as these were his meditations: —

"Through all the mysteries of our earthly lot, we would ever feel ourselves embosomed in the Infinite Strength and Peace, that with fatherly wisdom and motherly tenderness upholds and guides us, like stars in the sky, through our changes of night and day, of sunshine and storm."

"We would strive ever to commit ourselves to the serene and perfect laws that guide our human destiny, assured that what our nature appoints must be better for us than aught else we can desire or dream."

"Whether we walk in the morning light or in the night shadows, — over, around, and beneath us are spread these Everlasting Arms. . . . How real becomes the unseen world, no longer unfamiliar, but warm with the treasures and light of home! How we look through the half-opened gates into its glory and its peace, where the innocence and beauty of childhood must dwell in the life of which they are the image; and the ties that have been broken must be preserved in the love that made them ours; and the powers we would have trained here must be unfolded in the same care that inspired our striving, and will not let it be in vain!"

Now one can understand how this worshipper of the universe could write the hymn beginning, —

"Father, in thy mysterious presence kneeling,
Fain would our souls feel all thy kindling love."

There was no distance between belief and feeling, no opposition of heart and head. This volume has herein a deeply spiritual purpose.

M. Renan, — the sceptic, — in his "Souvenirs," says: "Il se trouve que les plus beaux rêves transportés dans le

domaine des faits, avaient été funestes, et que les choses humaines ne commencèrent à mieux aller que quand les idéologues cessèrent de s'en occuper. Je m'habituais dès lors à suivre une règle singulière, c'est de prendre pour mes jugements pratiques le contre-pieds exact de mes jugements théoriques, de ne regarder comme possible que ce que contredisait mes aspirations." A singular rule indeed! Proper for a man without convictions. Samuel Johnson pursued exactly the opposite method. Nothing, in his judgment, was so practical as what was most ideal. He believed in his finest dream, and tried to enact it; being persuaded that the shortcomings of conduct were due to the absence of loftiness in the idea. The true fact was aspiration. All men, as he thought, responded to what was highest; and it was only because the highest was not presented that they were cruel, mean, and base in their lives. It was the aim of his existence to lift them up by revealing the divinity that was in them; and this he felt he could do only by proclaiming the best he saw; and this he did always, the more persistently the older he grew.

Of the influence of this faith on his personal character, I cannot trust myself to speak. Here is the language of his intimate friend Samuel Longfellow, who has written his memoir: —

"With us abides as a memory and an aspiration the genuine nobility of soul. With us remains, a sacred and secure possession, the profound and elevated thought; the absolute faith in God; the clear, spiritual sight of things divine, ideal, invisible, as the realities; the keen moral judgment of men and events, untinged with bitterness; the reverent sensibility to all truly sacred things, equalled only by the prompt rejection of all that only pretended to be sacred; the absolute sincerity and sturdy independence in thought, speech, and methods of action, which, while respecting the freedom of others, may not always have been able to do justice to methods different from his own; the devotion to liberty in all its forms; the unwearied search for truth, and

the steady-working industry under the burden of bodily infirmity, the sensitive love of beauty in Nature and in art; the kindly sympathies and warm attachments; the too modest estimate of himself and the cordial recognition of the good work and worth of others; the bright mirth that lightened out of his habitual seriousness, — all these things abide with us, now that the voice is stilled and the hand lifeless."

As much as this all his friends will testify. One can only wish that the praise had been justified to those who were not his friends, by a few personal examples such as Mr. Longfellow could have adduced, had his sense of delicacy permitted. The story of Charles Lamb's heroism would be paralleled by Samuel Johnson's, if all were known. Of course, some of these qualities, — the basis of them all perhaps, — were due to constitutional bias and temperament; but the superstructure was erected by his faith. Of this there can be no question, as they who knew the man will bear witness. These things are said here in order that the intention and true bearing of these books may not be misapprehended. The bearing of the faith on character was in this instance very fine.

The service rendered by such a man in this age of purely external literary activity is immense. Had he been a disciple of the current Christian philosophy, the moral conclusions from his theory might have been taken for granted; but as a teacher of the opposite school, it is important that the ethical results of his doctrine should be exhibited. His interpretation of the cosmic idea is so lofty, stimulating, inspiring; so full of encouragement to every high spiritual feeling; so elevating and kindling, — that one is glad to find him on that side. He lifts the whole exposition into a sphere of ideal faith. Although not technically he is really a believer, and an enthusiastic one. The literal transcendentalist who holds that certain

primal truths are planted, fully fashioned, in the nature of man, are corrected by this thinker, who declares: —

"Of course, the transcendentalist cannot mean that at all times and by all persons the truths now specified are seen in the same objective form, nor even that they are always *consciously* recognized in any form. He means that, being involved in the movement of intelligence, they indicate realities, whether well or ill conceived, and are apprehended in proportion as man becomes aware of his own mental processes."

"It is not easy to see how we can have intuitive certainty of the continuance of our present form of consciousness in a future life; still less of what awaits it in a future life. But it is certain that knowledge involves not only a sense of union with that which we know, but a real participation of the knowing faculty therein."

"By intuition of God we do not mean a theological dogma or a devout sentiment; we do not mean belief in '*a* God,' Christian, or other, — but that presumption of the infinite as involved in our perception of the finite; of the whole as implied by the part; of substance behind all phenomena; and of thought as of one nature with its object, which the laws of mind require, and which can be detected in conscious or unconscious forms, through all epochs and stages of religious belief."

In the same essay on "Transcendentalism," Mr. Johnson, discussing the intuition of moral law, says: —

"How explain as a 'greatest happiness principle,' or an inherited product of observed consequences, that sovereign and eternal law of mind whose imperial edict lifts all calculations and measures into functions of an infinite meaning? And how vain to accredit or ascribe to revelation, institution, or redemption this necessary allegiance to the law of our own being, which is liberty and loyalty in one!

"The crude evolutionist who believes in the production of the highest by inherent force of the lowest, who thinks of the universe as fashioned from below upward, has a formidable opponent in the man who is persuaded that the world is fashioned from above downward; that all facts point heavenward; that what we can know is but the process of creative mind."

The ordinary rationalist who seems to be of opinion that criticism will eventually dethrone religion, is confronted by a scholar who is fairly abreast of the foremost students in this department, who reads all the books and hails literary discoveries with delight, yet who regards the work of criticism as provisional, as removing rubbish in order to reveal the walls of the "city that has foundations;" who pulls away incumbrances that the "house not made with hands" may be visible. The present volume abounds in conclusions which may startle casual readers, but which have no other intention than to bring the ultimate principles to light. They are passages, not chambers; avenues to the land of promise, that better country which is seen from afar.

The real value of books like these consists in their idea as well as in their knowledge. They are not content to vindicate ancient religions from aspersion, — that has been done already; it has even become the fashion to do it, among Orthodox people, too (witness the new volume called "The Faiths of the World"); nor do they admit the excellence of ancient religions in order that they may show how much more excellent Christianity is as the culmination of all antecedent faiths. The argument of Mr. Johnson is that the old religions are steps in the manifestation of *mind*, illustrations of the development of *consciousness* in man. The present volume, the masterpiece of the series, exhibits the evolution of the moral sentiment. The extensive affiliations of the Persian religion, its influence through Manicheism and Gnosticism on Christianity, its speculative ideas and social institutions, make it peculiarly interesting. No merely external study of dogmas and symbols, no critical knowledge of texts, is adequate to an appreciation of this. No partisanship, however generous, can do justice to it. The finest genius alone, fortified by competent learn-

ing, can feel its full significance. In this aspect, Mr. Johnson's account of Oriental Religions is unique in design and execution. That it has attracted no more attention is possibly owing to the circumstance of its entire originality. Neither the general public nor scholars are awake to the worth of ideas much beyond the line of accepted thinking. Mr. Johnson's absolute frankness, perhaps, repels more than it attracts; but the time may come when merit like his will be honored as it should be. Should that period arrive, these three volumes will be welcomed as not only among the best expositions of Oriental systems, but as the best and the first attempt at formulating the idea of intellectual and moral evolution, by far transcending in power any work now submitted to the thinking world.

O. B. F.

BOSTON, April 1, 1884.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

PERSIA.

I. ADVENT OF THE RELIGION OF PERSONAL WILL. — ITS ELEMENTS.

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II. DEVELOPMENT.

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Xenophon paid the highest tribute to Persian institutions; Plato scarcely behind him in praises. Coming of a great man opens the gates of imagination; Cyrus "father of mankind," 335. Infancy and growth of Cyrus of messianic type, 336, 337. As hero of philosophical romance, receives in Xenophon's "Cyropædia" the finest personal tribute in all antiquity; ideal marred by limitations of its framer, 338–344. To the Greek, Cyrus was the child of Destiny; of Providential purpose to the Hebrew, 345. The ideal as depicted by the imagination of the ages, points to actual force in some degree correspondent, 348. From Cyrus's day Iran meant no more a vast desert of warring hordes, but the Persia of the Great King; Rome showed in humanities of later legislation the pressure of Cyrus's heroic hand, 350. The hand which smote down the old gods of Asia, set up the coming God of Europe; without Cyrus "the Europe of to-day never would have existed," 351.

Persia hailed him as her deliverer from disintegration and decay; he awoke the old Iranian loyalty to personal Will, 357–359. Pupil of Aristotle, reader of Homer, etc. Alexander the higher ideal for which Nineveh, Babylon, Mede, and Persian had educated the races of Iran, 360. Not European; once leaving Macedon for the East, he never returns; Iranian tradition adopted him into the line of native kings, 361. The legend knows nothing of enormities, 362. Fitness of Alexander to fill old type of ideal personality, 363. Iran fed the imagination with colossal types of heroic Will, 364, 365. Later legends, 366. To Mirkhond the ideal philosopher as well as king, 367. Difficulty of reconciling outbreaks of fury with general conduct, 370, 371. Tragedy of personal character involved in human progress, 372. In Alexander an age shapes its instrument, 372–374. Zoroastrian priesthood put him in hell for burning the Nosks of the Avesta; ten Persian poets have sung the "Alexander-Saga," 375. Some palliation for his violent acts, 376. Human master pronouncing himself a god, 377. Alexander proved his descent from Jove, 378. No vulgar marauder; no praise thought extravagant, 381–383. Alexander aimed at progress, 384. Built institutions that were civilizations; his name protected the free thought of Aristotle at the Lyceum, 386. Cultus of his divinity in Egypt, 389. Nature, humanity, unity, brotherhood, were syllables shaping on the winds; later Judaism, Christianity, and Islam find their way prepared, 390.

Destiny of Persian empire had Alexander lived, 393. Monarchical God of Europe could have been evolved from Ahuramazda, as well as from Jahveh, Allah, or Abba Father, 394. Revival of Oriental monarchy might have foreclosed the Messianic tragedy; nothing in Iranian deity made world-influence impossible, 395. But Alexander's purpose died with him ; disappearance of the faith of Iran during the reigns of Macedonian and Parthian kings, 396. Macedonian strangers had little interest in Avesta, 397. Religion of the Parthians a cultus of the elements ; Magi transformed into revivalists of Ahura, 398 Collected and restored the old Avesta, 399. Conscience of Mazdeans not suppressed ; Parthians tolerant ; Edessa a fountain of Christian learning, 400. Parthians by no means uncivilized ; Mazdeism ; intolerance expected from a religion of Divine Will, 401. Interference of Parthian kings with Iranian political institutions unimportant, 402. No Macedonian or Parthian king a fit centre of hero-worship, 403. Political stability rests on the religious nature, 404. Much in Parthians to rouse the hero-worship of Iran, 405. In comparison with Roman Cæsars, Parthian enormities respectable, 406. Extermination of Parthians by Ardeshîr Bâbegân ; old religious organization of empire preserved, 407. The clergy, a kind of "State within the State ;" Ardeshîr rose to the place of Cyrus in hero-worship, 408. United the empire, 410. Old Avestan hate of unbelievers ; the Arab came to substitute a god and prophet ; Vision of Ardâi-Vîrâf, 411. An older Dante, 412. Energy of Ardeshîr more than rivalled by Shapûr I., 413. Heroic ideal of Mazdeism fulfilled in Sassanian line ; Shapûr II., conqueror of Julian and his Roman and Arabian army, 414. Khosrû I. and II. equally famous in Roman wars, 415. A daughter of Khosrû the first female sovereign of Iran. This great historic structure went down before the blows of Rome and Islam, 417. Typical form of Iranian ideal in Khosrû I. (*Nûshirvân*), 418–425. Khosrû's services to future ages in collecting the heroic legends of Iran ; native Persian literature perished at the Moslem conquest, 426. Age of Khosrû brings him into comparison with the Roman emperor Justinian, 428. Persecutions by Justinian ; tool of an intolerant priesthood ; attempts to eradicate Pagan and heretical belief, 430. Justin, Maurice, Phocas, Heraclius, pursued the policy of unifying beliefs by the exercise of despotic will, 431. But a new and stronger will appeared in Allah of Islam ; Justinian pure and his passions under control ; evidences of real humanity, 432. Bearing of Stoicism upon Roman law, 433. Degeneracy of Roman civilization, 434.

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475. Vows of Manichæan elect like the old Avestan formula, — "purity of thought, word, and deed," 476. Manichæan bishop to Augustine, 477. Main charges against Manichæism *Magic* and *Gnosticism*, 478. Plato crossed the seas to learn Magic; Persians called persons most fitted by nature for truth and religious wisdom Magi, 479. Christian world persecuted Magic as the work of the Devil; invisible realm of powers hostile to God, however, just as real to Christian believers, 480–482. Simon Magus a gigantic nebulosity of legend, 483. Magic of Gnostics of the nature of science, or rather was incipient science, 486. Supernatural magic of Church aimed at destruction of the natural magic of the scientist, 487. Under Christianity evil either result of God's will, or of the free-will which he has bestowed on man, 490. Paul adheres to old Jewish idea of Jahveh as the creator of evil in man; Christian doctrine of original sin and its expiation, 491. Man's impotence and God's wrath a monstrous deduction slowly evolved, 492. Epicurus stated the case fairly, 493. The thinker sees that evil must exist as the condition of progress, 494. To believe in the unreality of evil requires a mystic elevation of faith; but the belief has foundation in the facts of experience, 496. Science changes the old conception of evil by proving antagonism to be a necessity of existence and growth, 497. Inevitable antagonism, pain, and loss must be accepted through an absolute trust in the integrity of the moral universe, 498.

Connection of Manichæism with Gnostic schools rendered it obnoxious to Christian Church; Gnosticism traced in ancient philosophy and literature, 501. Gnosis, or *ideal knowledge;* our word Agnosticism proves by implication the immortality of the aspiration it declares a fruitless dream, 502. Gnosticism resisted that personal absolutism which is the essence of supernaturalistic faith; accepted the name of Christian, 503, 504. In Gnosticism, spiritual principles and ethical forces figured as persons, in true Iranian fashion, 505. The Church held this Gnostic epos to be blasphemy, 506. Heresy of the Gnostic that he put Christ among the Æons in a chain of being; Gnostic powers all in the proem of John's Gospel, 507. The multitude incapable of receiving the higher *Gnosis*, 508, 509. Not a few things laid to the charge of Gnostics highly creditable to their freedom and sense, 510. The claim of reason to determine religious conviction, 512. Christianity concentrated its hopes on an incarnation of God as the only refuge for man; Gnosticism

clung to the idea of perfection in God, 513. Docetic Christ of Gnostic, and supernatural Christ of Church alike impossible, 514. To the Christian, evil was the work of Satan; to the Gnostic, the cosmic energy of the principle of darkness, 515. The characteristic feature of Gnosticism, — the endeavor to express the idea of God as an active process, 518. The germ of a thoroughly free religion; at once scientific and intuitive; no necessity for bridging chasm between Perfect Light and Utter Darkness, 520, 521.

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Scientific study of religious development reveals continuous progress towards recognition of the universe as Infinite and as One; movement of every race from polytheistic to monotheistic belief; the monarchical idea transient, 525. Impersonal worship of ideas, principles, and laws the religion yet to come, 526. Every monarchical religion logically has resorted to the sword, 527. Opening of seventh century an epoch of disintegration, 528. Demand for assured trust in one supreme Will, 529. No God but God; Mahomet claimed a completer legislation than that of Abraham, Moses, or Christ, 530, 531. Islam enforced the logical right of revelation to sway every human sphere, 532. Could not escape resort to the sword, 533, 534. Arabia fit only to give birth to the prophet; not to establish his law, 535. Rapid growth of Christianity believed to be evidence of supernatural origin; rapid conquest would prove Mahomet's claim more valid, 536. His expectation to make the world the kingdom of God the push of humanity, 537. His summons nothing unfamiliar to his countrymen, 538. The unity of God embedded in Arabian memory and faith, 539. Mosaism and Christianity familiar to the Arabs, 540. Mahomet's first relations were with Jewish and Christian believers; did not derive inspiration from the Bible; knowledge of Old and New Testaments at second or third hand; knowledge of the past incomprehensible, 541–543. Preceded by a line of native poets who proclaimed Allah as above all gods, 544. Ancient "Rolls" of Mahomet probably the so-called "Rolls of Moses," 546. Sought only to recall his people to the service of One they already knew; pretended to no message from an unheard-of Power or Name, 547. His morality that of all good men in his day, 548. Sentences from Koran, 550. Mahomet's success not due to sensual appeals; reward and penalty of Paradise,

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PERSIA.

ADVENT OF THE RELIGION OF PERSONAL WILL.

ITS ELEMENTS.

I.

SYMBOLISM.

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ITS ELEMENTS.

SYMBOLISM.

THERE is an epoch in our experience when we become conscious of ourselves as individuals, distinct from the world of forces, natural and human, into which we were born. Before this beginning of our proper personality, we are more or less passive products, either of contemplation and imagination, or of traditional routine; in other words, we are either dreamers or plodders,—in the one case, drifting waves of abstract mind; in the other, atoms of a concrete mass. In neither have we become centres of special force. In neither have we learned that our estimate of the objective world depends upon what we personally know and feel and do, and, substantially, upon what we *are*. That

> "We receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone doth Nature live,"

is as true of the child as of the man, of the poor creature as of the hero or the saint. But the moral and spiritual possibilities involved in this constant law are realized only through the consciousness of ourselves as distinct from our surroundings, and, as it were, polar to them. This is the condition of progress, — that we know ourselves to be centres of productive force.

The organ of this conscious personality, the force which it brings into play for purposes of power and growth, is the *Will*. Strictly defined, Will is the concentration of

mind on the selection, from among the infinitude of objective forms, of that which suits the subjective desire, and the transforming of it from a thought to a thing in the shape of that desire, from an ideal to a real or actual image of it, — a transfer from brain to hand. And as one really worships that by which he is most deeply moved, so the ideal, the truly sovereign power for this stage of self-consciousness, is always a *personal Will.*

Beyond this stage there is a higher, in which the will, recognizing the eternal order of the universe, of which it is but a fragment, finds its ideal in conformity, not with personal ideals, but with this substantial order itself. And this step beyond the worship of personal will is foreshadowed in all the immature steps of experience, which point beyond themselves to its serene and perfect freedom, — although in individual life it is seldom reached.

Such is the order of individual growth. But it is not less the law of history, the course of humanity: the ages are its theatre, and the races are its material. In the oldest civilizations, even in their highest forms, we have found noticeable the absence of personal Will. Men are homogeneous. Classes, castes, tribal distinctions, family units, do not express essential individual differences, but at most only differences between certain *masses of similar persons*, or *relations*, and other masses equally uniform. The typical qualities of some races, such as the Hindu and Chinese, have kept them, as we have seen, on this imperfect stage, even down to the present moment, repressing that self-consciousness of which individual will is the exponent.[1] In their Southern expansion, the Indo-European race were subject to this repression, through climatic and institutional forces; but in their Northern and Western expansion, they entered at once on the epoch of self-conscious individuality. The Semites, starting from the other extremity of

[1] See the author's *China*, p. 946.

Iran, did the same, though with significant differences. The power of these combined energies to initiate the historic progress of the Western civilizations, has been fully shown in the historical survey already presented.[1] The central point of the whole movement is seen to be the evolution and worship of *personal Will.*

The earlier stages of Iranian development have been marked, not by any extended expression of individuality, but by a common veneration for great personal forces, wherever they appeared, and by a strong tendency in such appreciation to call them forth. This is itself a form of religious idealism. But we are now to enter on what may be called the typical religion of Iran. It may be well to begin with a review of the special elements which in men and nations accompany the advent of that epoch of experience which we have endeavored to describe, that we may see how faithfully these are actually represented in the Zarathustrian faith.

The most significant of these elements for the history of Religion is an *intenser play of symbolic expression.* I use the comparative degree, because symbolization is in some form a constant fact of mental life. Swedenborg's doctrine of "correspondences" was an imperfect adumbration of real spiritual dynamics, and rests upon the law that whatever a being is, must appear in what it knows or does; because self-manifestation is the inherent necessity of substance. "If the invisible things of God are to be understood from the things that are made," it is for the reason now stated. When the spiritual fact exists, the physical is made also, which represents it, just as surely as that one who is building a pile of stones in the morning light is building the shadow of the pile. The fact of "correspondence" is universal, the difficulty is in reading it; and the fault of the class of minds represented by Swedenborg is their over-

[1] See the author's *India* and *China*

assumption of final knowledge, and the fixedness of their formulas presented as a science of interpretation, — a fault not confined to any class of believers, but arising from the universal fact of personal limitations in the study of phenomena. It is, however, eminently the consequence of all positive religion, after its early or prophetic stage has passed into that of organization.

The substance of the universe is inscrutable. We know, indeed, that whatever we see must be symbolic of that which it manifests; yet we have no definite knowledge of the process of manifestation, save what we derive from the productive force of man. Personality is thus the basis of symbolic representation; and the more distinctly and energetically conscious we are of personality, as motive-power, the more freely do we use the elements of experience as signs of somewhat beyond themselves. As the centre of energy, it is personality that transforms our thoughts into things, our being into act, our mind into matter, our abstract into concrete; and every such process is the construction of a symbol or sign representative of ourselves. Here again we may recur to our threefold historical illustration. With the Hindu, who lacked power to seize and hold the one of these two poles of the process, — that of the concrete, — and the Chinese who failed to grasp the other, or abstract pole, all *symbolic construction* was in the main ill-defined and unconscious. On the other hand, the self-consciousness of the Aryan is concentrated on this very thing, the *constructive process itself*, by which the one force (internal) is transformed into the other (external). With the Aryan mind, natural symbolism becomes conscious, clear, significant, progressive, full of human relation and power. It is the natural activity of a mind that instinctively sees, not ideas alone, nor things alone, but the idea as producing the thing. Two conditions are requisite for every step in progress: first, to believe firmly that

there is an unseen and an unattained; and next, to believe as firmly that the actual materials of life can be made into its image.

This typical symbolism, however, simply brings to *ideal value and emphasis* the necessary processes of mental creation. We cannot think save in symbols. Language itself is a symbolic expression. We can express ourselves only in terms taken from the world of the senses, or in some way involving that world. So far we are all poets. We say "burning thoughts," "bright or dark moods." We speak of the "growth of character," the "branching out of plans," the "withering of hopes." We have all the seasons in our experience. We "revolve" like planets around a centre. We have "ups and downs," "corners and spaces" in our hearts; "heights and depths" in our reason; "hard and pliable characters." We unfold our powers, plume ourselves, shut ourselves up, pour ourselves out; have upright or downright, winding or backward, ways. We sigh and groan in spirit; leap and sing inwardly. Our souls bend in prayer; aspire, or breathe, after God. We have a great many general terms, which suggest no material image, yet are not without recognized meanings for the reflective or contemplative mind. But the moment we make active use of those meanings, clothe them with positive individual form and purpose, turning thought into thing, the process and result must both be expressed by physical images. Symbolism is mediation between inward and outward, person and performance, man and his environment.

Work is the image man makes of himself on the world in and through nature. Art, science, politics, trade, are just the outward shape of the human will; incarnation of the spirit; thought, dream, purpose, symbolized. The word, shaped by the organs of articulation in the air, represents the speaker, and somehow impresses the remotest orb with

his likeness. Am not I myself here on this sheet of paper, in my handwriting, every word penned an autograph—nay, photograph, made by the invisible sun of spiritual reflection? Do we not fling off impalpable aromas all the time, so that, as the hound scents his master, the nerves of finer organisms find us out by means of them, even when we have ourselves got a thousand miles away? Do not people construct our traits and habits and beliefs out of a lock of our hair, or a few strokes of a pencil, down to minutest shades of character, as Cuvier built up a mastodon out of a few bones? Every atom of blood, brain, nerve, that is in us—every stir of limb or feature—represents us. What is Phrenology, when the motion of your little finger betrays every secret of your inward behavior to the wise?

It is easy to ignore the symbolism of ourselves, in which we have our being, weaving it about us by the unconscious organic motions of character. "Alp and torrent shall inherit our significance of will." Nature is a convenient cooking-stove to one, a private mint to another, an outflaming of ineffable beauty to a third.

"To some she is the Goddess great;
To some the milch cow of the field:
Their wisdom is to calculate
What butter she will yield."

But if we are poorly conscious of what we do with the world to which we are related as creators of symbols, still less common is it to recognize the law of *perception* on which all doing and creating must rest. We can have no cognizance whatever of the world without us, except in so far as our nature, its complex of individual and universal relations, affords a ground for conceiving it. In other words, it represents these personal or spiritual relations. Just as it is the participation of our human nature in truth that enables us to recognize truth in others, and its par-

ticipation in love that allows us to delight in their love, so it is with our perceptions of the Cosmos itself. I can behold space as infinite only because of the relations of *human* thought and feeling as such with infinity; and so the star-sown universe is a symbol of these human capacities, without whose activity within me no telescope could ever have suggested to me such an idea as boundlessness in numbers or space. Nature must either be void and meaningless, or it must represent to man that which he is, or does, or tends to do, by natural forces. The endless roll of waves upon the beach impresses us only as our mood touches it with our own sense of immeasurable task or yearning, of personal destiny or conscious power. We are the diamond refining in the dark; we the lightning that breaks from tilting clouds. What we see is what the brute sees not: it is ourselves. Man's aspirations burn before him in the stars: his passions grovel and snarl and rend their prey before him in the beasts that perish. He reads the character of another, ever so different from his own, by some subtile opening of his own qualities into a capability for traits which his conscious will or disciplined spirit would probably refuse to entertain. And whether we read the tornado, the pestilence, or the struggle for existence from a pessimistic or optimistic point of view, or as reverent hearers of Nature's incitements to duty and humanity; whether we interpret these destructive powers as curses upon fallen man, or as conditions of his ascension to the best, by natural evolution, — it is still the limit or the liberty *in us* that supplies the alphabetic signs, wherewith we read. All symbols represent humanity, either its actual or ideal values.

Ideal as well as actual, — for man finds images of God also in Nature, only because of his own essential personal relations with the ideal or infinite; and being so related, religious symbolism is natural and necessary mediation between

himself and his highest conception of being. Resting, then, on this universal law of personality, the choice of special symbols with the definite meaning given to the object chosen by the symbolizing faculty is not arbitrary. It is the product of positive relations, as organic as those of language; and though the individual mind becomes more and more clearly conscious of them, they are never so wholly unrecognized as not to be instinctively pursued. In this way we must explain the general uniformity of meaning ascribed by different ages and races to the same element or phenomenon in Nature.

In view of this universality in the most important element of religious construction, the supposed distinction between polytheist and monotheist, Pagan and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, which is conveyed by the use of the term *idolater* for the former of these classes, appears very superficial. In both classes the method is the same; the result is a symbol, — its meaning, as well as its choice, being determined by the laws and limits of human experience. Who, then, is an idolater, and what is an idol? We can only arrive at the idea that any people endowed with a degree of social consciousness have ever worshipped "stocks or stones" by abstracting from the object that symbolic significance which was the very ground of its selection and the substance of its meaning. It represented an ideal in the mind of the worshipper, as is evident enough from the fact that it was believed to enshrine and cover immeasurably more than it was, or could be, as stock or stone. It is not the fetichist only who confesses this when he breaks his image in pieces if it does not answer his desire, and finds another. The procedure does not differ essentially from that of the Christian, who venerates an image or picture so long as it represents the vision of his faith, or who takes an historical personage, around whom certain religious symbols have gathered, as the representa-

tive of God, or as God himself; and then, as his scientific, moral, social, spiritual stature enlarges, comes to demand larger symbols of his ideal life. Or, if we give to religion the broadest meaning, as simply the service one pays to his ideal, in whatever form that may stand for his thought, must it not necessarily be the worship of some object which represents symbolically the sum of his best inward desires? Does not money, or fame, or fashion, or culture, serve for the time the same purpose as the "idolater's" stock or stone? Religious symbolism does not vary in its method: it varies according to the quality of the personality of which it constructs the palpable ideal. To suppose that in one case it is the work of a perfect organ of vision, made to see objective truth, and in another the work of an organ which must see false images only, is entirely irrational. However superior as symbols the Jahveh of the later Jews and the "Father" of Jesus may have been to gods that dwelt in gold and silver statues in temples of Babylon, they were none the less products of symbolization, not objective realities,—imperfect types of the inscrutable substance, in which all men are contained. Just as the sun has been universally the symbol of deity in these and in all other forms of worship, just as light has been for all men in all ages the undying symbol of ideal good, by whatsoever name expressed, and yet both imperfect symbols of the reality to which they point,—so with the more distinctly anthropomorphic personal ideals in which men have centred their faith and hope. Both the Semite and the Iranian have found a loftier and purer meaning in religious terms, in proportion to the degree in which they represent the pure sense of personality. But that the really objective truth of deity should be given in any of these fragmentary forms, however beautiful, is impossible, —first, because deity is infinite; and second, because the symbolizer can only deal with such external beings or

phenomena as correspond to his inward ideal, which grows as he grows.

In other words, religious symbols are properly our human ideals taking external relation to us, that we may adore them unselfishly, not as our own, nor as ourselves at all, but as above ourselves. And men are the more able to make such use of symbolism, the more their emotion and their volition are expanded by social and moral communion. The history of man is a striving to generalize his experiences, to universalize his ideals; and his will, which is the energy that shapes these in its own likeness, is also the diviner power that seeks and strives to lose itself in that which it adores. Thus, in the first flush of self-conscious power, he makes his controlling experiences stand for creative and productive gods. Then, dramatizing nature and life in their interest, he constructs mythologies, which are as free as possible in their origin from selfish purpose, and so are in fact poetry and prophecy for all time. The believers who saw purity in the fire, might and calm in the ocean, imperishable guardianship in the stars, divine benignity in Nile and Ganges, feeling in their steady alternate rise and fall the pulsation of a mighty heart which forever deposited the rich loam of far mountains to receive the living sunbeams and seeds; and out of these symbols builded the fair humanities of old religions, so similar through remotest spaces, — simply did what we are doing when we fill heaven and earth with the signs and tokens of whatsoever we most sincerely believe in, at the same time showing its real counterpart in our human conduct. When we repeat after our fathers that God is one and omnipresent, and then, like them, proceed to ascribe qualities and purposes to His infinity which we know only through finite experiences, and worship these as His, what we have done is simply to lift these qualities out of man, that we may in all honesty adore them as above ourselves.

We are as truly symbolaters, or "idolaters," if that is the word for the heathen, as the heathen are; and we cannot help it, so long as we demand forms of language as material for religious intercourse. Love, Power, the Father, the Spirit, the Word, are symbolic expansions of the highest human powers and virtues. Races of men most marked by self-assertion have always made their religious ideal an Infinite Will. Or if, with the mystics of every faith, we reverently refrain from ascribing any finite or definable mode of existence to the Fulness of Being, we are still reaching forth towards that pure Essence, which is known to us only as implied in our own consciousness of existence. Finally, the Moral Order of the universe, which religious science substitutes for all forms of external will, can be recognized only through the conception of Law; and the uniformity, continuity, and fidelity of law are symbols of a moral and spiritual allegiance revealed only in the constitution of the soul. Thus the progress of religious symbolism, as related to the idea of God, is the reflex of the phases of ideal human will. As related to the conduct of man, the highest form it assumes is that of constructive work. And this, too, depends on the growth of the personal ideal out of passive conformity into the energies of liberty and love. Not more naturally does the inward discipline of the Quaker select silence as the symbolic medium of worship, or the sensuous dependence of the Catholic prefer the arts of pomp, than the broad free thought and open sympathies which are not bound to sect or form, find their adequate expression in ways of ennobling work; bearing its living symbols of universal truth and good as the tree its native fruit.

The universality of the symbolizing process indicates that the relations with which it is concerned are real and natural. In its great leading lines, therefore, its speech is not arbitrary, nor the choice of fancy, but the permanent

expression of steadfast harmonies between the soul and the outward world. The poet speaks to the common heart simply because he has immediate sense of these natural correspondences, which prove that the mirror in which men see themselves is one and the same for all. He has no license to alter or violate or ignore these relations. The poetry of all times and tribes speaks through these a common language, even of emotions; and alphabets are but vehicles for transporting a currency everywhere valid. Who, for example, could mistake the organic meaning, the momentous human interest, which in all mythologies has centred in the Tree? In the Babylonian sculptures, in the Bible legend of the Fall, in the story of the same in the Persian Bundehesh, in the Greek Garden of Hesperides, in the old Phœnician vase-paintings, in the beliefs of antiquity about the dragon-guarded gold-dust of the Scythian North, we find the same image of a Tree of Life, guarded or in some way controlled in its relations with the aspirations of man by mythical dragons, or serpents, typical of perils of the body or the soul. The terrors and splendors of fire are associated with it; and the penalty of the Promethean theft of fire for the benefit of mankind is but one symbol out of many of the awe of man before his momentous possession of an element which penetrates all nature and all thought with an omnipotent energy: and for this the early Aryan mind could find no better type than to call it the fruit of an all-containing Cosmic Tree, and no use less universal than to transmit the symbol in all the branches of the race. From first to last, *growth*, human and personal, has found no better symbol than this,[1] nor any that can refuse affinity with that old Norse Yggdrasil, whose ever-ascending top is in the unmeasured spaces, its roots

[1] This is the sum of meaning involved in the universal use of the tree in Oriental symbolism: the attempt of Lenormant and others to identify the Bible "tree of life" with the Persian *haoma*, the Indian *soma*, and all other similar representations, is made in the interest of Bible revelation, and has no scientific value. *Contemporary Review*, September, 1879.

watered by the Fates of Time and the Well of Truth; while the squirrel runs up and down with incessant defiances between the eagle that watches in its boughs and the serpent that gnaws at its foot.

Nor can we admit that the older religions, as contrasted with Christianity and Judaism, are specially chargeable with worshipping the symbol in place of that which it signifies; in other words, with allowing the image to intercept and absorb the honor due to the ideal. Religious sentiment, of necessity, becomes absorbed in what represents its ideal. And is not this as true of the Christian symbolism of Trinity and Incarnation, as it was of the older worship of sun and stars? Is it not as true of Hebrew Talmudism, and Catholic Papism, or Mariolatry, and Protestant Bibliolatry, as it is of the Hindu's recitation of his Gâyatrî verses? When the symbol is embraced by sentiment, thought becomes identified with its object, and what represents its God practically becomes its God. In no case, however, is the fact disproved that there exists in all civilized thought a more or less distinct acknowledgment of some divine transcendence of the symbol abiding in the deeper experience. And while it is true of the cruder forms not of one but of every religion, that the symbol does intercept and hold the worshipper's interest, veiling the pure truth as more or less abstract and unreal, — even as the confessional shuts off the essential meanings of right and wrong, and as the religious custom or creed hides the Infinite Life it would limit and define, — yet it is equally true of the higher stages in all religions that their symbolism embodies the spirit of the Brâhman prayer: "Open, O world-sustaining Sun, the entrance to truth, hidden by thy vase of dazzling light. Soften thy splendors, that I may behold thy true being! From the unreal, lead me to the real!" [1]

[1] Brihad Upanishad, V. xiv.

There is, however, a real difference between ancient and modern symbolism. The more self-conscious religion becomes, the more strongly its symbolism tends to become distinctively personal. From natural phenomena it has passed over to purely human. It is, of course, in some points of view, in the interest of progress to represent the ideal by conscious forces, in place of outward physical types. But the integrity of the cosmos requires that thought should express itself by things; that man should find, or make, this very world in his own image. The health of character is in its stress to outward embodiment; and whatever divorces religious experience from this,—whatever prevents the natural escape from self-consciousness into living forms of action,—represses earnestness and narrows thought. The supreme Ideal, which we call God, is not limited to personality, to the individualism of conscious will. God is cosmical: whatever inscrutable substance that adjective may typify, is God. The phenomena of the universe, inclusive of human activities, interpreted by its laws of order, are the true symbolism of the Spirit. Materialism, as expressing the direct purpose and instant end of mind, is as just a term as it is unsatisfactory when used to define the origination of mind. Science restores this natural relation of man and the world, which the primal instincts of religion affirmed, but which theologies absorbed in self-consciousness have broken. To what has heretofore been called "matter," with little regard to its essential relations to spiritual substance, science secures its forgotten rights. As a consequence, the pure identity of thought with thing, of essence with manifestation, of substance with symbol, must come to full recognition, bringing withal that directness of relation between thought and action which the highest conscience commands in the name of integrity, and which ennobles human nature by due respect to the senses and the world. This directness of real symbolism

amounts, in its ideal, to nothing less instant than one's unconscious expression of his emotions through the features, or of his vitality through the lungs and the heart. And if, as yet, we are far from apprehending the nobler fruits of these ages of material science; if we are still inapt to find the higher meanings of this our unfathomed cosmos of inviolable laws, — doubtless it is for lack of those ideals in ourselves which would give such symbolic meanings to what we see and do. The world is waiting, not for our knowledge only, but for our worship and our love. Is it in itself the less capable of responding in living parable to the noblest aspirations of men, because as yet men do not demand such response; because we have been using it for merely mechanical and competitive purposes; because our hot haste to master its treasures has covered with whirling dust the meekness of the wind-flower and the patient-girded watch of the stars?

But while we recognize the tendency of the later stages and larger development of self-conscious personality to check in some ways, for a time, the direct contact of the ideal in man with pure nature through symbolic expression, we must again emphasize the fact that it was the earlier stages of the same self-conscious will that gave to symbolism its first powerful impulse; because in these stages man first learns to act as a force distinct from his surroundings, and so to use the world with clear knowledge that it does represent his own ideal. As we have found this personal element to be the special characteristic of the Iranian mind, we are prepared to find symbolism especially prominent in its religion; and in this we are nowise disappointed. The development of this tendency is here upon a scale that can be called no less than typical in the history of thought.

THE FIRE-SYMBOL.

THE common impression that the religion of Zoroaster is distinctively the religion which centres in the Fire-symbol, is erroneous. Pyrolatry is common to all religions. No other natural element so perfectly represents supreme force as the element of fire. As light, it is the universally recognized symbol of truth; as heat, of love; as cosmic vital energy, of conscious being; as astronomical centre, of unity; as all-producing and all-sustaining, of creative and providential care. Like personality and will, it mounts back to its source, and will not be cut off thence. Penetrating, stirring, and shaping all things, it is the image of every pure, perfect, irrepressible power. It is the first-born of creation: germ, seed, and atom, the children of its play. The soul itself is said to glance down from heaven as a beam of light, and as a beam to return whence it came. For all tribes from India to Peru, the fire burning on the altar, fed by the purest and most vigilant that it may never become extinct, is the type of security, immortality, and adequate care. Into this holy hearth-flame (*Hestia*), parent of the city, the homestead, the shrine, awful to gods and inviolable by men, no defiled thing shall enter. For the Greek, the solemnity of oaths sat there to rule Olympus itself; for the Roman, the guardianship of the State. The Vedic Aryan saw Agni rise from his primitive fire-churn, to bring down the blessings of the gods, the flame his living tongue, his leaping steed, swift as thought to make earth and heaven one. The Turanian Magi of Media adored the same element. How the Semite's passion played all its keys on this element of fire, — Assyrian, Phœnician, Hebrew, — in symbols of creation, preservation, destruction, in sexual and ascetic rage, in a self-abandonment which could find no fitter image than passing his children through the flame! His Jahveh seals covenants

with men by moving in a smoky flame between the parted offerings;[1] burns in Sinai, in the desert pillar, in the face of Moses, over the Ark. He is not only a fire that devours the sacrifice, but a blaze no man can see and live. To Christianity he descends in the shining cloud, the transfigured countenance, the judgment-fires, that attend its mythological Christ. Nor can Jesus find any symbol of the coming of "his kingdom" more suitable than the lightning's flash from east to west. With what ease and grace this type absorbs all others! "Allah," says the Koran, "is a flame burning like a star, as a lamp set in pure glass within a niche."[2] "Ibrahim," says El Masûdi, "having worshipped the stars and the sun, and grown to the higher worship of Allah, was thrown into flames by the giant Nimrod, but the flames refused to burn, and not a fire could be kindled anywhere on earth that day."[3] "Father and mother of all gods," says the Aztec hymn, "is the fire-god (lightning); a bird with gleaming wings in the centre of the world." The modern Kirghis Tartars so venerate fire that they will not spit into it.[4] The tribes of Kafiristan cast their offerings through flames.[5] From the simple faith of the Iroquois, that when the tribal fire went out the tribe would perish, to the refined myth of Prometheus, evolved from the primitive mystery of the generation of flame by rubbing two bits of wood, into clear and full expression of the pains and penalties under which social progress is won for man, — through the endless maze of tender and yearning superstitions associated with producing and preserving the element of fire, runs the consciousness of mankind that this element is the centre of social relations, the fountain of home, of art, of culture, of civilization. And so poetry and religion anticipated the crowning recognition by science that life and growth are

[1] Gen. xv. 17. [2] *Sura* xxiv. [3] *Meadows of Gold*, etc., p. 83.
[4] Hutton: *Central Asia*, p. 325. [5] *Central Asia*, p. 421.

but the extension of the solar fires. So continuous is man's organic *rapport* with fire, that it is difficult to draw the line where his direct, instinctive fear, awe, or love passes into conscious use of the symbol to express his feelings or thoughts; still harder to mark where the personal imagery reaches up into the sphere of pure imagination, and deals in essential relations and creative laws. But that this one visible symbol sweeps the whole compass of human experience in its plastic power, that fire is the very speech and garment of the spirit of man, is sure.

It should seem more practicable to distinguish the stage of growth in which fire as a mere element is the all-absorbing symbol, from that in which the religious sense is concentrated on its more distinct and dominant forms, especially such as the sun and stars. Solar mythology would thus mark a stage beyond the primitive forms of pyrolatry, as representing a distincter reference to personal meanings and an escape from the vagueness of unconscious instinct. The oldest Aryan fire-gods do in fact flow into each other, as if their common symbol merely expressed those transitions of feeling which in the rude man refuse to be held in prescribed or permanent conditions. Neither in Bactria, nor in Vedic India, more than in Turan, nor even afterwards in the Persia of Herodotus, do they take, like individuals, to dwelling in temples. Their simple altars rise on mountain-tops, in the open spaces of light, where sun and stars are but portions of the all-sufficient elemental life of fire. The sun, on the contrary, has always his shrine, usually his human image. In the terrible arrows of his beams, in the majesty of his rolling orb, and in his battle with the clouds and storms, he penetrates man's consciousness like a tremendous will: he must be received through some softening mediating image, in some walled space where his splendors shall be veiled. The moon and stars also require temples, images, and human mediators,

for the opposite reason that they seem so far away, while yet exercising a control whose grand, silent mystery man ever yearns to penetrate. Hence the mythology of nations like the Irano-Persian, Greek, and Hebrew, in whom the personal life has been developed, centres in the sun's course; and the adventures of their gods are even traceable through all the mazes of Protean names and dramatic situations, back to his all-embracing movement, the stages and strifes of his diurnal march, the alternation of day with night crowned with moon and stars. In this relation between astrolatry in its largest sense and the progress of man to distinct personal consciousness, it is perhaps possible to find historic vestiges of two distinct stages. Much ingenuity has been spent, and not without success, at least for the study of Semitic races, on proving that the moon and star cult is older than that of the sun, — representing the nomadic, as that does the more developed life of the agriculturist and townsman. To the wanderer of the steppes, night brings coolness and relief; to the settled laborer, the sun's bounty is more conspicuous; and it is argued in detail that the sun-myths are always myths of higher civilization than those of the moon and stars, with which they are historically in conflict, as the war of nomad and settled laborer is the standing strife of the early world.[1] That the real and historic order of progress is here caught sight of, is probably true.

But though solar myths may represent a social advance in comparison with lunar, especially among the Semitic races, we can hardly explain the star-worship of the western portion of Iran, as compared with the pure pyrolatry of the eastern, upon the same theory of advance in personal self-consciousness. In the valley of the Euphrates, where cities and cultures supervened upon the nomadic life, astrolatry was a natural tradition, passing on into those

[1] Goldziher: *Mythology among the Hebrews.*

astronomical studies in which, as all writers agree, the Chaldeans, if not founders,[1] were at least typical representatives in the ancient world. That their civilization was so self-conscious and intellectual, may well explain the close connection of their celestial symbolism with personal qualities and emotions. But does the less concentrated pyrolatry of eastern Iran, which was developed into the religion of Zoroaster, imply a lack of personal self-conscious will? Our whole investigation will be found to show the contrary. If I am not mistaken, the explanation of the difference between these two lines of symbolism lies in the more vigorous sense of liberty, individual and tribal, which distinguished the eastern from the western Iranians, and more particularly the Iranian Aryans from the Turanians and Semites. In the former class of tribes, the will claimed ideal rights for itself; while in the latter, its peculiar intensity, in passion and desire, which made self-control and self-reliance impossible, drove it to worship such ideal rights in some supreme authority, whether in God or man. Thus the western Iranians fell under vast imperial or religious tyrannies. The eastern tribes worshipped a personality in their gods and heroes, reflected from their own; and therefore dependent on their free spirit, rather than suppressing it. This fundamental distinction is of the highest importance, and will, I think, be made fully evident in our future studies. It goes back, on the one hand, to the earliest free Aryan or Indo-Iranian life;[2] on the other, to the material and subservient civilization of the old Turanian and Cushite races, and to Semitic self-abandonment to the passions.

On this difference of character is based the contrast in the fire-symbolism of eastern and western Iran, not on any such distinction as that of nomadic from settled life. The Bactrian Aryans were led by an inherent individual

[1] As Pliny calls them.

[2] See the author's *India*, chapter on "Primitive Aryas."

energy, which kept them broken up into heroic tribes, ever standing for their rights, and made the heroic element the all-controlling one in their mythology. Their moral nerve found its adequate symbol in the free flash of fire, rather than in any permanent or fixed image, like the sun, moon, or stars. Fire itself, in its pure universality and freedom, was more to them than any such exclusive embodiment, moored, as it were, in space and form. The very multitude of forms and names under which they celebrated it in their later ritual, indicates the freedom in which the symbol moved. It seems as if this powerful personality pursued its visible counterpart throughout nature, seizing all possible transformations of its substance for its own purposes, resolved to use the symbol, not to be used by it. The Zoroastrian meant by fire whatever was noblest in personal will; and would not allow that it ever destroyed life, even when one was burned to death.[1] It must serve life, not destroy it.

The pure pyrolatry of the East was not therefore a mere crude indeterminate fear before the element of fire, but rather that intuition of its essential symbolic relations which could take up any visible form or phase of it at will, and put religious significance into all. Even in the Vedas the freedom of choice, now described, begins to limit itself; and while the simple fire-churn is still the centre of faith and awe, hymns to the sun occupy a very large place in the imagination of the poet. There can be no question but that in the oldest heroic legends of Persia, which the Shâh-Nâmeh has preserved, and whose leading figures — Yima, Thraêtona, Kereçâçpa, etc., with the conflict against the dragon king Zohâk — are celebrated in the Avesta itself, we have transformations of very old Aryan symbols of the solar fire, in its visible powers and relations, its strife with the rain-cloud and the night.[2] It is equally

[1] *Vendidâd*, v. 30. [2] See Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, as referred to further on.

probable that the manifold labors and sufferings of heroes like Rustem and Siâvaksh belong in their original forms to the same solar cycle, and correspond with those of the Greek or Tyrian Heracles (Dionysus). This transformation of the fire-symbol into heroic, rather than contemplative or quiescent, types of divinity illustrates very forcibly that freedom from oppressive limitations which we have already ascribed to the energetic personality of the eastern Iranians. The sun was their typical hero in the fields of heaven. It was Ormuzd casting Ahriman into his native darkness. The later Persians swore by the sun. Its crystal image hung in the royal tent, and the king was called by its name. "From the sun," says the Avesta, "are all things sought that man can desire." Through the whole history of Aryan faith runs also the fire-symbolism of Mithra, beginning in Vedic vagueness, as the kindled fire,[1] but concentrating gradually in itself all noble and spiritual meanings, recognized by the psalmists, which could be represented by the sun, and especially the sovereignty of truth and justice; till, mingling with Chaldean elements, it is all gathered up into the wonderful Mithra-Yasht of the Avesta, unsurpassed in its symbolic expression of duty, love, and power in the life of man. All the Greek authors identify Mithra with the sun. Nor do the stars, individually or as constellations, fail of honor in the Avesta, — all the conscious functions of stellar service freely moving around the element of fire as their common and central force.

The Iranian Aryan was specially gifted with the sense of immediate relation between ideas and things: his main concern was to bring the body into correlation with the mind. This was the sum of Avestan ethics, "pure mind in pure body." Not mind here, body there; not mind above, body below; neither the one nor the other alone living by its own

[1] *Rig-Veda*, v. 3, 1-3. Muir, pt. iv. p. 68.

force, but the one in the other, representing itself by the other. Therefore he thought and lived in symbols of conscious will. Every natural form that could possibly reflect his motive-energy took a typical personality for his imagination. No equal gift of personifying abstract qualities and ideas in visible images, with that displayed in the Avesta, appears in any other Bible of the world.[1] Even the latest construction of the religious cycle, the *Zrvan-akarana*, or "Time without Bounds" of the Sassanian Persians, was the development of a mere category of existence into the supreme personal source of good and evil. The seven *Amesha-çpentas* are mostly abstractions turned into gods. Every religious name like *Haoma*, *Vohu-manô*, *Akô-manô*, is at once a personal force and the thing which suggests or typifies such a force.[2] So with beggary, treachery, poverty, winter, sleep, desire, the evil eye, pride, contempt, disease, etc.[3] The whole cosmos, in its multiplicity of active powers, was subjected to apotheosis in the same way. But through all this specialism *pyrolatry* itself, the love of the fire-element itself and for itself, retains its control. The Avestan priest is *Âthrava*, "provided with fire." Down to the present day the Pârsîs, like their fathers, regard the fire-altar (*Atesh-gâh*), or ever-burning naphtha-spring, the hearth of their faith. They discern Ahuramazda himself, not in the solar orb exclusively, nor in the starry heavens, nor in the lightning, but in *fire:* this is "his son," his "first-born," his "image," his manifested self.[4] To fire, the Persian kings addressed their prayer before battle; on their death it was solemnly extinguished. For whatever purposes used, even in domestic life, in labor, or in art, it must be brought after a certain period to a holy place, as belonging to Ahuramazda.[5]

[1] See, for illustration, Spiegel's *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 1.
[2] See Bleeck's *Yaçna*, ix. note 1.
[3] See *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 135; *Vendidâd*, xix. 140; ii. 116.
[4] *Yaçna*, iv. 52.
[5] *Vendidâd*, viii.

"Offering and praise I vow to thee, O Fire, son of Ahura! Be thou honored in the dwellings of men! Blessed the man who constantly brings the fuel and the implements of service to thee!

"Mayest thou burn evermore in this house, through the long time, to the resurrection day! Give me swift brightness, food, and means of life! Give me wisdom and prosperity, and readiness of speech! Give my soul sense and understanding ever growing; courage, the ready foot, and swift to move! Give vigilance, abundant posterity, pure and able to bless my house, my clan, my province, my country! Give me knowledge of the better world, of the shining abode! May I reach good reward, and good name, and my soul's bliss!"[1]

Other symbols had little value, save as partaking of this, or of what this signified. What attracted Iranian imagination was not any fixed form or function, but pure energy of life and growth, which, as the substance of personality within, sought its own fit outward type in the free element of fire. All its splendid symbolism meant this unquenchable ardor of desire and will. There was the *Cypress*, life irrepressible, flame-like in shape and in persistent upward pressure. It shall be type of immortality. Zarathustra plants it before the fire-temple, and when it has grown majestic, surrounds it with a golden palace like a sheath of flame, and is called to ascend from its boughs to Paradise.[2] There was the *Pine-cone*, flame-like again, and from perennial fires of growth. This shall be the Âthrava's type of life, which he bears to the altar-service. Both these are forms of that clearest symbol of life and progress, the *Tree;* from which man and woman are said in Iranian mythology to have sprung, the two from one stem.[3] The *Haoma*, at once divine plant and beautiful youth, is type of the living and saving Word, bringing strength and joy alike to soul and sense, making the poor and rich equal.[4] It grows in the sea that flows with life fountains, where birds scatter the seeds of life, and the sharp-eyed, swift-winged eagle of

[1] *Yaçna*, lxi.

[2] See Humboldt's *Cosmos* (quoting Firdûsî), ii. n. 129.

[3] *Bundehesh.*

[4] *Yaçna*, x.

wisdom (Sîmurgh) and the watchful fish protect it from harm.[1] Was it strange that the morning cock and the night-guarding dog should be associated as types with these practical energies? Especially was the bull sacred to this sense of vital forces; and his "soul" pours out prayers to Ahura for protection against the outrages of evil powers.[2] Above all, the *Ferours* (*Fravashîs*), ideal types of the souls of men, hovering above their heads, were adored for the glory of their light, — pure bodies of flame, and defenders of man against evil; and their title signifies victory and growth.[3]

Instinctively the Persians transferred to their supreme God that Assyrian symbol of deity, the winged circle enclosing a human figure in vigorous action. The bull with open wings, the eagle with hawk's head, the four-winged cherubim and wheels of the prophet's vision,[4] were all suited to the vital personality of the Iranian mind, whether of Aryan or Semitic, western or eastern origin; and while the monuments show how readily these were accepted by the Persian "fire-worshipper" from races more inclined than himself to fix the symbol in elaborate forms of art, they all betray limitations in the expression of nerve-energy when contrasted with the unconfined ethereal flame with which he had already satisfied his demand for freedom.

Such was the imagery, æsthetic and religious, with which the eastern Iranians lifted nature to the height of their own intense life of aspiration and will; such the opening stage of those forms of civilization which have followed Iran in giving the same symbolic meaning, in a great variety of

[1] *Yasht* xii. 1; xiv. 29; xvi. 7. Spiegel's *Avesta*, iii. xiv.

[2] It is his seed that makes Nature's fertility. It is probable that the symbol goes back to the old Aryan storm-cloud. The seed of the bull is the dew. (*Yasht*, vii. 4.) The cry to Ormuzd is the roar of the storm conflict. Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 151.

[3] See Neriosengh. Schwenck, *Die Mythologie der Perser*, p. 314.

[4] The angels guarding Paradise, in Genesis, were these Chaldeo-Assyrian creatures.

directions, to their whole social existence. So that we are here met by the spontaneous and child-like poetry of the grandly awakening human consciousness of personal Will, bearing in its bosom the germs of three thousand years of progress. Here are no mere figures of speech selected by the understanding, no allegories consciously constructed, but natural correspondences intuitively recognized. This most responsive symbol, which stirs and waves and flashes to heaven with the motion of the flame within the soul, is the very tongue of prayer, the very garment of praise.

We may theorize as we will on the organic relations between Iranian nerve-force and its physical environment. This at least is certain: Iran was indeed the true fire-temple of Nature, bespread with naphtha springs, meteoric lights, and burning mountains. The mystery of the flame brooded over it and burst from its bosom. To this day the hot winds parch the dry grass till they want but a spark to fan it into flame; and the stars shine through the clear atmosphere with a splendor that seems articulate with spiritual meaning and relation. No religious symbolism could seem more natural or imperative on such a region than that of fire. Yet, as we have seen, special race-qualities greatly contributed to the result. We have seen that the Persians absorbed Assyrian and Babylonian imagery without subordinating their passion for the pure fire-symbol to any of these distinctive models. The reason was, that they represented the Iranian idealism of Will in a freer and more personal form than did the nations farther west. These last, directed by Semitic self-abandonment to sensuous impulse, came to worship will in the form of great religious and political systems of arbitrary power. In the eastern tribes, the preponderance of Aryan energy produced a high degree of individuality. The Aryan held fast to the personal pole of the symbolic process, and used the external object as representative of his own force. The

Semite buried himself in the physical side of the same process, and suffered its organized power to master him. The slavish sensualism of these Semitic cults was illustrated by the golden bed of Bel, spread in the temple at Babylon by his priesthood, for the sacrifice of virginity to their worship of the senses. Assyrian and Babylonian chambers of imagery had become the synonym or type of sensual idolatry in the East, when the Persian entered them from his rude mountains. Upon them, as upon Egyptian polytheistic rites and animal worship, he came down in fires of judgment. He was the iconoclast of religious symbols. In the name of his "living light" he smote down the bull of Egypt and blasted the couch of Bel. He substituted for the older gods of concrete forms ideal genii and immortal powers, — unseen hosts warring for principles in the awful names of good and evil, right and wrong. He suffered no name to stand between him and the Almighty Spirit, whose son and messenger was the living universal flame.[1] In this claim for the free personality of man in his attitude towards forms of the ideal, the eastern Aryan stood alone. Even the Hebrew escaped the common slavery of the Semite to sensuous symbols through his prophets only, and there only partially. When his fetichism and Moloch worship had been developed into Monotheism by an *intense* nationality, even its *intense* sorrows, and the sharp disciplines of its contact with other races and faiths, could not bring Jahvism to recognize the rights of the personal Will. Under the absolutism of its God, the demand for knowledge, the right of ethnic sympathy and expansion became almost null. In his nobler elements, this all-mastering personality represented the

[1] Nothing, I think, can be more erroneous than the statement of Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xix.) that Zoroastrianism never rose beyond the standpoint of immediate naturalism, while Buddhism and Christianity became universal religions. If, as he says, Zoroastrianism was only fitted for Iran (p. 37), this was true only of its peculiar form, not of its essence.

authority of conscience as well as will; but it was conscience raised into a terrible theocracy, in which human freedom was systematically sunk to that degree that a religious reaction to the purely inward law of individuality, without external symbol of the earlier kinds, became a moral necessity: and hence Essenism and Christianity. But Christianity, itself Semitic, substituted a body of equally dominating personal symbols for the old institutional or legal ones, and the authority of the Christ became as exacting a mastership as that of the law. An infinite Ruler of the World, a Jahveh conceived as Father no less than Judge, commissions a Messiah to save the world that should believe in Him, or his Son; to establish conditions of salvation,—moral, spiritual, ecclesiastical. And this personal government of the Christ, this continuation of the objective Semitic monarchy, so controlled the later dogmatics of Christianity that the more or less Aryan element fell into its track; and its exaltation of the man Jesus into Godhood was far from lifting the human personality as such into similar spiritual relations, and so affirming its proper freedom. This exclusiveness of the Christ-symbol the real Aryan element, embodied in science and free thought, has been nearly two thousand years in overcoming.

For the Persian, the individual was the living flame of Ahura, in full and pure communion with His purpose, and like Him master of the fulness of the fire-symbol and its power to consume all the evil in the world. Ahura is indeed *person*, in the fullest sense. He creates the world by His word, like Jahveh, and all theories of cosmic self-development are wholly foreign to the Persian as to the Hebrew or Christian mind. But the human is not so lost in Him as in the terrible Jahveh, whom none can see and live; before whom human will is blasphemy, and the sole right attitude of man that of prostrate abdication of every

claim and right of his own. Ahura is no destroyer *per se*, no mixture of good and evil, but the pure essence of good. It is true, too, that Zarathustra was regarded as a mediator; but it was without touching his purely human nature: he is treated by Ahura simply as one among the children of men.

The Persian, in short, was an influx of human self-assertion; and the religion in which his energy took shape was a flow of spontaneous inward force. When the inevitable period of organization came, absorbing much of this free spirit, and the Âthrava became merged in the Magus (probably first in Media, then in Babylonia), the original impulse revived in the reaction by which the Magi were suppressed and the pure worship of Ahura restored by the great Darius. But of course the tendency of time, ritual, organization, and traditional forms, in Western Asia, was to sink this freedom of the fire-symbol in positive heliolatry. When the sun, as personal symbol, usurped the place of the pure flame of Ahura, Iranian genius had degenerated. This is evident in the national degradation down to Sassanian times. Persian edicts of the fourth and fifth centuries commanded that the sun should be held the highest deity, while water and fire should have inferior service.[1] Christians were persecuted for refusing to perform these rites in Armenia.[2] In Rome, Julian centred his revival of Paganism in the philosophy which permitted him to call the sun the living image of God, and even God himself.[3] But nothing could so fully indicate the disappearance of the pure fire-symbol, and its specially Persian type of personality, as the mad freak of Elagabalus, who worshipped the sun under the form of a black, conical stone.[4] The old flame-symbol had meant a spiritual power, warring against

[1] Act. Martyr., quoted in Rapp, *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xix. 72.
[2] *History of Vartan*, by Bishop Elisaeus (translated by Newman), p. 9.
[3] Gibbon, chap. xxiii.
[4] Ibid., chap. vi.

evil spirits in Nature and man. It did not so much seek to put God into shape for man, as to put man in the way of participating in God, and aiding His will and work. It was the poetry of aspiration, not the prostration of self-abandonment. Its deity was purpose, will, principle; too free and spiritual to need temples, too personal to want the flesh of sacrifice when he could receive the soul of the victim.[1] Its construction of special rituals and statues grew only by contact with Semitic civilizations.[2] Nothing can be more free from ceremonialism than the older Gâthâs of the Avesta, the earliest literature of the faith. The Persian turned the gods of the West out of doors to confront Nature, and if they could not breathe its fresh air, to die.

[1] Strabo, chap. xv.

[2] In later times statues were common in Persia. (See *Clem. Homil.* ix.) It is an absurd theory of Spiegel, that Persian hostility to images came from Semitism! (*Erân. Alterth.* i. 393.)

II.

THE MORAL SENSE.

THE MORAL SENSE.

ELEMENTS OF ITS CULTURE.

THE beginning of personality, — in other words, the consciousness of self as distinct from its surroundings, — is, in a special sense, the advent of the Will as a positive power. It opens the way for transforming inward into outward force, ideas into things. The mental habit of combining the two sides of our being, making ideal use of actual materials, is the condition of progress. Neither an individual, nor a race, nor humanity itself, advances by any other method than that of creating symbols of its own ideal experience in the world of the senses, through the energy of personal will. Of this energy the Iranians were the typical race of the early world, heralds of the will-power which continues to transform Nature into the image of humanity. The rare union of sensuousness with ideality, of physical susceptibility with personal force and earnestness, which we shall find to have distinguished the Persians from the races around them, is the key to their *fire-cultus*, the form of religious symbolism most significant of these qualities. Zoroastrianism makes this element the ideal bond of man with the universe.

Our metaphysical analysis, then, explains the symbolism which so strongly marks the Iranian religions. But symbolism is not the only force which awakes into energy at the advent of the conscious will. Of course, this epoch is the true birth of the Moral Sense also: not of conscience absolutely, but of moral choice as a self-conscious and

creative force. Thus we should expect from the personal qualities of the eastern Iranians that their ideal would centre in moral conflict and discipline. It was in the ferment of their motive-energies that they learned the profound meaning of moral choice, — the balance of the soul and the world 'twixt good and evil. The contrast and conflict of powers in Nature, which had vaguely impressed the desires and fears of mankind, were for them drawn more sharply by the battle of moral forces within. The conscience had awaked with the will, and shared its ardor. When we consider the strength of their impulse to put the ideal into visible and natural life, we shall not be surprised at the part played by moral protest and reaction, even in warring against the outward obstacles in its way. The polarities of light and dark, on which the order of Nature turns, embodied and reflected this strife between the senses and the spirit. This was symbolism in its ideal form. The war of Ormuzd and Ahriman was a war, not of embodied beings, still less of institutions, but of essential principles. It was the substance of their brain, and made the fires that ran along their nerves, back and forth, a battle. They did not build up that terrible Dualism with the speculative intellect. We have little to do here, at least in the earlier stages of the faith, with theological or philosophical systems. It is the articulate voice of the moral alternative, passing judgment upon the world as a whole, rending the elements asunder in a schism of opposing wills. If a race deserves honor in human annals, in proportion to the emphasis it has given to the radical conflict of principles on which moral progress begins, to the practical energy of its effort to meet and solve the antagonisms of experience, a very high place is due to the Persians of the Avesta.

With these Iranian tribes, then, begins the consciousness of a shaping power, through moral conflict, upon Nature

and life, whose epochs are the steps of history through the modern ages. For this force of personal Will was not in the lower races which preceded them in Africa or Asia. It was not in the higher civilizations of India and China, where the predominant place was held, as we have seen, by brain or muscle, abstract thought or concrete work; while in Iran it belonged to the nerve that makes them one, to that motive-force of will which quickens the mind to progress as an ideal aim. With the Iranians begins a poetic ardor for self-discipline, a passion for winning ideal virtue by honest payment of the price. The external circumstances by which these powers were fostered are now to be stated.

These differences between the Indian and Iranian branches of the great Aryan family, after their separation, — the one to the south, the other to the west of their common home on the plateaus of Central Asia, — have been regarded as of a very radical nature. Nothing, it is thought, can explain them, especially those of their religious beliefs, but a bitter schism, resulting in the transformation of the gods of the one race into the demons of the other. But this theory, of which history certainly affords no other evidence than that of language, seems quite unsatisfactory, even on that score. It is sufficient to reply to the few instances given of such reversed meaning in the names of gods, that corresponding changes went on in at least one of these names, and that the most important, in India itself, without revolution, simply through the natural evolution of Vedism into Brahmanism.[1] Words like "Asura" and "Deva," both originally meaning sovereign power, had of course a terrible as well as a friendly side; and in process of time each name would naturally enough

[1] The word "Asura," which first meant "lord" in the highest sense, in Brahmanic times received a bad meaning.

come to be appropriated to the one side or the other, exclusively, without losing that common attribute of power whose elements it had become necessary to distinguish. We have only to suppose that the two branches of the Aryan family, which were removed from each other in space as well as in conditions of growth, assigned the parts thus differently to explain the whole difference in the meanings attached to these words "Asura" and "Deva," in the Veda and the Avesta, respectively.[1] Besides linguistic oppositions, it is true that the two civilizations became subsequently so unlike as to form a striking psychological contrast. But the original resemblances, linguistic and religious, are so numerous that they can be referred only to the common Aryan stock, whose elements of belief became divergent simply under the stress of different climatic and social conditions. Terms expressive of the most important relations continued common to both systems: such as designations of social dignity and national pride (*Ârya*); the priesthood (*Âthrava, Hotar*); the prayer (*Mantra*); the personified offering (*Soma, Haoma*); the Supreme God (*Ahura*, the Indo-Iranian *Asura*, who is certainly the ancient Vedic *Varuṇa*); the light considered as guardian of truth (*Mithra, Mitra*, usually connected respectively with *Ahura* and with *Varuṇa*).[2] Haug is of opinion that the thirty-three Vedic deities correspond with the thirty-three genii mentioned in the Avesta as surrounding the sacrificial rite.[3] And the Vedic ceremonials for the household (in the *Gṛihya-sûtras*) are strikingly parallel to those in the Avesta of a similar class.[4] The primary personages

[1] The word *dasyu*, employed in the Vedas to describe conquered enemies, and in the Avesta (*daqyu*) to designate subjects of the nation, is a similar instance of the natural partition of a common meaning, which in this case is that of "subject." See Darmesteter's *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 270, a work in which the theory of a schism is fully disposed of. The Avestau demon, Indra, is probably not the Vedic "lightning god," but a different name, Aindra. See also Justi.

[2] See Lassen, i. 319–23.

[3] *Essays*, etc., p. 276.

[4] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, vii. 527.

of the Avesta legend,—Yima, Thraêtona, Kereçâçpa,—are Vedic in name, have correspondent functions with their Vedic analogues, and are fully shown by these relations to have originated in the solar mythology of the ancestral Aryan race. They were developed types of that conflict of the sun with the cloud-serpent, whose continual repetition made so large a part of the imaginative interest of those early tribes.[1] The preservation of the common conception and of the names associated with it in the myths of both races, proves a continuity of development without break or radical change, from the interpretation of Nature as a physical or cosmical strife to the transfiguration of it with moral and spiritual meaning.

Even that dualism of light and darkness which seems so peculiarly Avestan, is characteristic also of the Vedas. It involves nothing like hostility between the two systems. It is, in fact, the response of Nature to the contrarieties in human experience, as such, which belong to no special race or religion. The oldest faiths rest on the adoration of the light and the dread of the dark; but it was not the outward light and dark that brooded over the soul so much as the antagonism felt within it, giving significance to these symbols for the sense. This the Aryan conceived the more intensely by reason of his peculiar endowments of clear thought and energetic will, comparatively free from those violent emotions which in the Semitic races tended to blur moral outlines and drive blindly from one extreme of susceptibility to another. The exclusively moral interpretation given by the Iranian branch of this ethnic family to the great cosmical antagonism was in accordance with their special genius. But it

[1] See Darmesteter's fine exposition of this point (*Ormazd et Ahriman*). He traces all the elements of Avestan mythology, certainly with great ingenuity, to the old Aryan myth of the storm-cloud (pp. 96–216). Barth (*Revue de l'Histoire de Religion*, i. 116) criticises this theory as too narrow, showing the facility with which all expounding theories can be formed as universal keys to mythology. So Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. xxiv.

was not unrecognized by the Indian branch also. Not only in the perpetually recurring myth of Indra's war with the cloud-serpent Vṛitra, in which all moral as well as physical blessings were expected from the pure sunlight, but more especially in Varuṇa and Mitra, the personified bonds of truth and righteousness, typified in the same image, and in the sleepless Âdityas, immortal children of light, from whom came every good and perfect gift, — in all these symbols the conscience of the Vedic worshipper, his ideal of holiness, were the passports to safety, the guard against ill. But the dark power was not here emphasized to the same extent as it is in the Avesta, and hardly rises to the dignity of antagonist. The herdsmen of the Indus felt the light and darkness mainly as the life and death of their cattle, their wealth and poverty, their success and failure in the strifes of rude clans. And as the mighty flow of tropical rivers and the languors of a refulgent clime drew them to a contemplative life, repressing self-assertion and will, — not only the light and the dark, but all other contrasts in experience floated and melted together for the thinker into the one sense of infinite deity, while the masses received their gospel from a slowly developing priesthood. The heroic element also, which though by no means lacking in Hindu life was yet but secondary and left the religious interpretation of Nature to a higher caste, could hardly be expected to work out an ethical symbolism of her grand phenomena through resources of its own.

But the Iranian saw, in the Titanic antithesis on which the universe revolves, *the life and death of character.* Light was truth and immortality; darkness was falsehood and decay. The Avesta shows us a late stage of this conception, after the spaces and spheres had become transparent to the fires of conscience, prompting to escape the bonds of evil service into the liberty of obedience to the ideal.

How far this had entered the life of the people we may not say; but in the oldest Gâthâs the evidences of an intense moral earnestness are beyond question. The Dualism of the Aryans was germinant. Mazdeism referred all good and evil to positive principles warring for the possession of the universe. Its defiant protest against the lower nature wrote itself out in what we should call a mystic hieroglyph, were not the feeling too direct and realistic, all over the heavens and earth; so that they could tell but one tale, — the war of truth against falsehood, rightful sovereignty against unrighteous revolt, heaven against hell; and the rolling days and nights were turned into the everlasting Yea and Nay of the soul. The very order of the elements, by which the contrasts are mutually sustained and completed, became the constant reflection of a positive rent in the moral being of man. Here, in the opening of his conscious energies of will, we find the germ of those terrible fictions of a gulf separating him from God on which later theologies, especially Christian, have been founded, and which no mediatorial scheme, in the view of enlightened reason, is competent to span.[1]

It is obvious that such consignment as the Avesta makes of half the visible universe to malignant powers, and of the whole to an internecine personal strife between the spirit of good and the spirit of evil, must be of comparatively late origin. Not only does its abstraction of principles from phenomena imply this. That all these shades and degrees of mutual dependence in the phenomena of light and darkness which would naturally establish a certain amount of cordiality between them for the simpler mind, should be effaced in the general battle-array of all-pervading and absolute oppositions, can only be the result of long stages of struggle with natural obstacles. Severe

[1] See the Author's *India*, p. 6.

conditions of social and physical being must have steadily resisted the fulfilment of ideal purpose, and kept it conscious of inward checks and contradictions, — as if some opposing principle exerted a power of will equal to its own, working through inexorable outward forces. To have impregnated all Nature with this personal strife of good and evil for the soul of man, testifies to a developed moral consciousness, which could only have resulted from permanent external conditions of resistance. These conditions are not far to seek.

While the Indian branch of the Aryan family, from causes already given, sank their native energy in overmastering social and religious systems that rivalled the uniformity of Nature, the Iranians doubtless hovered for awhile on the high, cool shelves of the Hindu Koh, whose energizing climate is shown in the well-made, industrious, and spirited Tajiks and Kafirs of modern time, — the true representatives, in speech and physique, of the old Iranian type.[1] Thence they descended into the Bactrian highlands, a rugged region of alternating heat and cold, where climatic contrasts combined with Turanian nomadic tribes to make their agricultural life a constant struggle with enemies both physical and human, in which ceaseless vigilance was the price of victory. On one side the mountain heights and snows; on the other the varieties of soil and scenery that promised due reward to wise choice and determined will. In these cradle-lands of Iranian energy the free Afghan tribes of our day, however degenerated by native feuds and foreign diplomacy, doubtless retain the marks of these old Aryan conditions. Bold, vigorous clans, given to labor, and passionately fond of personal freedom, they are rendered contentious, and even inclined to treachery, by the hard necessities of their life.[2] The old Iranian tribes had

[1] Hellwald's *Russians in Central Asia*, pp. 97, 101–2; and Hutton: *Central Asia*, p, 257.
[2] Spiegel: *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, i. 311.

to pay their way by steady labor on a rugged soil. The seasons made its results uncertain, and malice lurked in summer drought and winter storm. The farmer must have one hand free to fight off Turanian marauders; so that the soldier had a social respect in Iran which he could never reach in India. The Aryan will in India bent before gods; in Iran it bloomed into heroes. The primitive man, or king, becomes in Hindu legend Yama, god of the future world; in Iran he is Yima, builder of paradise in the present world: and this thoroughly human master yields at last to the too powerful temptations of success, thereby losing his kingdom. The lie by which Yima fell, ever afterwards the type of all sin for the Persian conscience, was evidently man's infidelity to that implied contract with the stern forces of Nature by which he was obliged to purchase all he possessed by steady toil. The hero of Iranian legend is ever the truth-teller, and his moral power must be as great as his physical. This admiration of truth was probably a measure of the difficulties in the way of maintaining it; perhaps also of its rarity. We are disposed to think that whatever of justice there may be in the reputation of the later Persians for insincerity, in contrast with the constant exaltation of truth and reproof of falsehood in the religious literature of the nation, may have had its origin in the inexorable terms of a strife with Man and Nature which was apt to prove too severe even for a never-forgotten ideal. The strife of petty clans, the law of the stronger, the precariousness of property, the caprice of the climate, the seeming tricks and lapses of Nature from her promises, were all causes of demoralization; while the free spirit of the mountaineer, the personal energy of the race, its habits of industry, and its aim to redeem Nature to productive uses, stimulated honor and faith. These ideals asserted themselves the more strongly for the peril in which they stood, and the constant necessity for their

warning and rebuke. The purely heroic legends, which in Iran take the place occupied in India by dreams of spiritual absorption, even among Kshattriya chieftains of the solar and lunar races, and by rivalries of saints with deities in prayer and penance, are ample evidence of the real and practical stress of this struggle with the conditions of life.

The whole plateau of Iran was as suggestive of the war of elements as it was provocative of human struggle to master them. It is a world of broken, heaving strata, "a Cyclopean workshop,"[1] whose violent contrasts of fertility and desolation are results of the latest convulsions of the planet. Its sharp transitions of temperature and relief might well have seemed pronounced hostilities of will, bits of fixed or capricious purpose, living mutual contradictions set face to face. Here was indeed a theatre for the opening of the historic epos of the human will! A grand natural symbolism of moral conflict, of success and failure, of duty and opportunity, girt by rewards and penalties, prodigality and hopeless waste, was the unwritten Bible of a strife between hostile principles for the mastery of the world: enormous snowy ranges, half-extinct volcanoes, amidst zones of cold;[2] salt deserts that still close up around Persian towns, and border paradises of verdure and flowers; the mocking mirage, the moving sand-column; hot blasts of summer and sweeping winter storms; luxuriant vales where the rose and nightingale reigned, and barren, waterless reaches that defied culture and awed the husbandman as with colossal hate; insects voracious and poisonous that swarmed in the coast-country to the south,[3] and the great Turanian wilderness on the north, with its predatory tribes, — and the eternal march of sun

[1] Gobineau: *Les Perses*, i. 152.

[2] As old a writer as Justin describes Parthia as possessed by extremes of heat and cold. *Geographical Character of Iran*, MSS. i. 32.

[3] Braun: *Gemälde der Mohammedanischen Welt*, pp. 299–350.

and stars through the alternations of day and night, over it all! Here was indeed the fit arena for the hates of Ormuzd and Ahriman; for the war of Mithra, fertilizer of deserts, against the Daevas of darkness and cold; for the holy work of Avesta-saints, the destruction of noxious creatures from the benignant earth! A land, too, for divine legends, where heroism makes the saint. The sand-floods of Gobi have covered hundreds of towns.[1] The volcanic rifts of Daghestan are still a terror to the traveller.[2] The quicksands of Khorassan swallow caravans in a moment.[3] The prodigious vegetation of Mazanderan, land of demonic and magic lore for the Iranian imagination, impenetrable and dank, still propagates disease, and drives the people in summer to the highlands for safety.[4] One third of Seistan, the home of legendary and epic heroes, is moving sand, the rest a rich mould; and the climate oscillates between violent extremes.[5] The undulating hills and rich plains of Azerbijan tremble with subterranean fires, and the sandstorm and naphtha-flame were in very truth pillars of cloud and fire that moved "along the astonished lands."[6] The fertile oasis of Balkh, "mother of cities," is girt with waterless desert plains, where the fierce Scythian still sweeps over the steppes upon the husbandmen and their villages, like the hordes of demons whom Firdûsî's heroes had to fight. The paradise of Cabul is set amidst the terrors of mountains that frown from a height of eleven thousand feet, and above that rise for eight thousand more, white with eternal frost; relaxing their awful brows as they look down on the "joyousness of silver streams and emerald gardens, glowing beneath a sapphire sky,"[7] where the first glance of the sun has startled all seeming sterility into instant splendor, like a creative word. In

[1] Hutton: *Central Asia*, p. 348.
[2] Von Thielmann: *Journey in the Caucasus.*
[3] Markham's *Persia*, p. 334.
[4] Markham's *Persia*, p. 346.
[5] Ferrier: *Caravan Journeys in Persia*, etc., p. 427.
[6] See Lesley's Report on Coal (1862).
[7] Harlan's Agricultural Report, 1854.

fact, Persia properly has two climates, a warm and a cold, — the narrow, dry, but palmy strip on the southern coast; and the land of passes, to the centre and north, cut by deep gorges and rising into rugged heights,[1] wondrously colored by the living light, or swept by arctic snows. Travellers tell us that no tracks in the world are more difficult than those between the great towns of Persia, across Alpine passes, which only mules can traverse, even after the many ages of civilization that have succeeded each other in the land.[2] As you approach Persia from the west, you are met by a barrier ten thousand feet high; and through this mountain rampart the resolute and persistent streams fail not to cut their way to the Mesopotamian plains, turning at right angles to their natural course between the limestone ridges, and making for great rifts in the crystalline mass.[3] In such wondrous figure does Nature reflect the majestic opening of the history of personality, — another Avesta writ in mountains and floods; first real consciousness of the freedom to choose and to achieve.

Such was the physical environment of the Iranian tribes; such the school of their imagination and conscience. How profound was the effect on both, we may see in that important chapter of the Vendidâd, which gives a list of the evils created by Ahriman to infect the different regions of Iran. Whether this curious passage enumerates, as has been generally supposed, the successive migrations of the Aryan tribes, or, as is more probable, the different countries opened to Zoroastrian faith, it at all events describes salient experiences of the people, and shows how closely physical and moral elements were associated in their

[1] Kiepert: *Lehrbuch der Alten Geographie*, p. 63.
[2] A. Arnold, in *Contemporary Review*, June, 1876.
[3] Loftus: *Travels in Chaldea*, p. 310.

minds. Some of the evils specified are obviously marks of developed forms of religion, with positive rites.

"As the first best of regions, I, Ahuramazda, produced *Airyana-Vaêjô*, of good capacities. Thereupon, as opposed to it, Angrô-mainyush, the deadly, formed a mighty serpent (storm-cloud) and frost (snow) from the Daevas: ten months of winter and two of summer, and dire disasters from the snow. As the second best, I produced *Gâu*. Thereupon Angrô-mainyush formed a pestilence fatal to cattle. As third, I produced *Marv*, the righteous; then Angrô-mainyush formed war and pillage. As fourth, I produced fortunate *Bâkhdhî*, with lofty banner; then Angrô-mainyush formed insects and poisonous plants [" hostile horsemen," — *Harlez*]. As fifth, *Nisâi;* and Angrô-mainyush formed the curse of unbelief. As sixth, *Harôyu* (Herat), the water-diffusing; Angrô-mainyush produced hail and poverty. As seventh, *Vaêkereta;* and Angrô-mainyush produced the witch. As eighth, *Urvâ*, abounding in pastures; Angrô-mainyush, the curse of devastation [" crimes," —*Harlez*]. As ninth, *Khneñta;* Angrô-mainyush, the inexpiable deeds [of lust] against nature. As tenth, the fortunate *Haraqaiti;* Angrô-mainyush, the wickedness of burying the dead. As eleventh, *Haêtumat*, the brilliant; Angrô-mainyush, evil sorceries. As twelfth, *Ragha*, with three races; Angrô-mainyush, the curse of over-scepticism. As thirteenth, *Chakhra*, the strong; Angrô-mainyush, the evil deed of burning the dead. As fourteenth, *Varena;* Angrô-mainyush, untimely periods of women (ill-boding omens), and non-Aryan plagues (invasions ?). As fifteenth, Land of the Seven Rivers (India); Angrô-mainyush, untimely menstruations and irregular fevers. As sixteenth, those who dwell without ramparts on the sea-coast; Angrô-mainyush, frost from the Daevas." — *Fargard*, i.

The *Zend* commentary adds, "There are other fortunate regions, valleys, hills, and plains."[1]

The length of this list of places and evils, its artificial construction, the institutional nature of some of the ills mentioned, and especially the resolution of all this experience into the dual action of principles embodied as persons, indicate a comparatively late origin of the chapter. But its

[1] This translation is from Haug (abridged): *Essays*, etc., pp. 227–230.

testimony to the persistent action of the physical causes above-mentioned is all the more impressive.

Such a process of abstraction and personification could not be the product of an early stage of culture. It is more intellectual than that monotheistic tendency which, both in the Semite and the Aryan, is itself of later origin than polytheism. Its rise in the Iranian tribes, under the conditions now stated, must be explained by the intensity of their imagination and will. It is highly improbable that in the distinct and elaborate form in which we find this conception of a world-strife in the Avesta, and especially in the earliest Gâthâs, it was very widely spread among those tribes. The seat of its elaboration was probably the Bactrian, or eastern borders of Iran; and the manner in which the worshippers of *Daevas*, or false gods, are spoken of points to a reaction on older and less spiritual beliefs. The moral protest that informs it proves a great movement of reformation, to which the name of Zoroaster was attached, but whose roots were in powerful tendencies fostered by the physical and social causes we have thus far traced.

DEVELOPMENT.

I.

AVESTAN DUALISM.

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OF the long process by which this spiritual and moral dualism was wrought out, history gives little record. When we first find the faith of Zoroaster, the old fire-cultus has found a twofold personality, the substance of which is this: Ahuramazda, — "the living creator,"[1] "all-wise Lord,"[2] "source of light for the world,"[3] "creator of the stars by his inborn fire" (or "mingling glory with the lights"[4]), and "by his intellect, of the good creatures, ruled by the *inborn* good mind (*Vohu-manô*), Thou, heavenly Mazda, makest them grow,"[5] "giving with hands full of help to the good," "by the warmth of his pure fire strengthening the good things,"[6] "creator of all good through the tongue of the good mind," "father of all rectitude" (or "purity"[7]) in thought, word, and deed, "appearing in best thought and rectitude," "giving perfection, immortality, wealth, and devotion,"[8]—is opposed at every point by Angrô-mainyus, "the hurtful spirit,"[9] or "the evil mind" (*Akem-manô*), "spirit of lies" or destruction, who poisons the mind with his impurity of thought, word, and deed. The one creates all that works for the good of man, physical and moral; the other in pure moral opposition, and at the same time, produces all evil thoughts and things. *Thus all things have their moral and physical contraries in one.*

[1] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 302.
[2] Spiegel: *Avesta*, Bd. iii., Einleitung, i.
[3] *Yaçna*, xliii. 2; Haug.
[4] *Yaçna*, xxxi. 7; Spiegel.
[5] Ibid., xxxi. 7; Haug.
[6] Ibid., xliii. 4; Haug.
[7] Ibid., xlvi. 2; Spiegel.
[8] Ibid., xlvii. 1 and 2; Haug.
[9] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 304.

These two spirits or principles are called primeval *twins;* nor is there any distinction affirmed as to their origin. Good and evil, right and wrong, exist before them in the nature of things, it would seem; since they are said to have chosen between these, each his own part according to its wisdom or its folly, its truth or falsehood.[1] They simply are here, stand before the soul, and it must choose between them. It takes its part and pays its vows. These two united have created the facts of "life, death, and how the world shall be."[2] The increaser says to the destroyer, "Neither our thoughts, doctrines, wills, vows, words, acts, laws, nor our souls agree."[3] The soul of a man cannot belong to both: "May we be such as help the renovation of the world, and the wise spirits shall help us. This is to be united with wisdom."[4] "Ahuramazda hears the helpers of good. May he guide me by his perfect wisdom!" "May thy kingdom come! O Ahura, give good to the pure man who lives righteously."[5] "So falls on the powers of falsehood (*Drujô*) annihilation. They who enlarge the glory of the good pass to the abode of the good mind (*Vohu-manô*), of the wise (*Mazda*), of the righteous (*Asha*)."[6] "Therefore perform the commandments which Mazda has given to men; for they are the perdition of the wicked, but profit to the pure, the fountain of happiness."[7] "To the good the spirit of the earth tells the everlasting laws given by thy intellect, which none can abolish"[8] (or "deceive"[9]).

Somehow by the very coming of good things come their negations, fired with living hate. "Ahriman bored

[1] *Yaçna*, xxx. 5; Spiegel and Harlez. Haug translates "one created *reality;* the other, *non-reality*," by which term he cannot mean nothingness, but falsehood.

[2] *Yaçna*, xxx. 3 and 4.

[3] *Yaçna*, xliv. 2 Haug, who does not think the two essentially opposed, translates "do not all these things follow us?" *Yaçna*, xlv. 2.

[4] *Yaçna*, xxx. 9; Haug, Harlez, Spiegel.

[5] *Yaçna*, lii. 9.

[6] *Yaçna*, xxx. 10; Spiegel. Haug says, "All perfect things are gathered there."

[7] *Yaçua*, xxx. 11.

[8] *Yaçna*, xliii. 6; Haug.

[9] Harlez.

through the earth," says the Bundehesh, "so that it was rent by lies and strife, and at midday was dark as night."[1] Powers of good, spiritual and holy, sometimes represented as qualities, sometimes almost personal (on the verge of becoming so at least, the idea hovering between these on the wings of the imagination and feeling), aid Ahuramazda and his good souls. Embattled hosts, forces of fraud, falsehood, destruction (*Daêvâ*), war in the elements against them, to be resisted by prayer, by vows, by abjurations of their service, by praises of the best, and by good thoughts, words, and deeds. Indispensable is industry, raising cattle for food and wealth and progeny. "In Ahuramazda was the earth-spirit (*Ârmaiti*), in him the spirit that formed the cow when he made her paths that she might go from the tiller of the soil to him who does not cultivate it."[2] "Of these two, she prefers him who cultivates with care filled by the good spirit. But he who does not till her, but worships the Daevas, has no share in her good tidings."[3] Ahura protects the settled life of the (shepherd or) tiller. "Listen not to the teachings of the wicked [robber tribes, doubtless], for he gives to destruction house, village, district, province; but kill them with the sword," or "drive them away with strokes."[4] "The wicked," says Zoroaster, "protect those who oppose the holy and forbid the cattle to roam through the lands; whoever drives them out [foes of agriculture] follows the ways of wisdom in what concerns the herds."[5]

These passages certainly seem to refer to the herdsman's life as opposed to that of the wild brigand, or nomad in the worst sense. Harlez does not think it means anything like *settled* agricultural industry.[6] So Spiegel. Haug's translations are free and bold, and cover fixed settlements. But

[1] *Bundehesh.* Justi, chap. iii.
[2] *Yaçna*, xxxi. 9; Haug: "to call upon him to till the soil."
[3] *Yaçna*, xxxi. 10; Haug.
[4] *Yaçna*, xxxi. 18.
[5] *Yaçna*, xlv.; Harlez.
[6] *Avesta*, ii. 28.

at all events it is *industry* that is enforced as against *idleness*, amidst severe discouragements from foes human or demoniac, or both. "Whoso cares for the cattle with diligence is in the service of the good mind,"[1] or "shall inhabit the fields of the righteous and good"[2] (that is, paradise). *These wicked interlopers must not be spared.* "I will remove from thy community disobedience and the evil mind, the despising of relationship, the Druj nearest the work [that is, idleness], the disdainer of obedience, the bad measure of the fodder of the cattle."[3] It is difficult to understand who were the Daeva-worshippers who belonged to the army of Ahriman. In a confession of faith, which is evidently of later origin than what has already been quoted as Zoroastrian, they are spoken of as sorcerers and robbers (of the earth, or cattle), and as doing damage to the quarters, or clans, of the true worshippers.[4] The Avesta gives no account of the origin of these unbelieving tribes. They are taken as existing facts, known as children of Ahriman by their unbelief in the pure law and their corresponding habits,—just as the Zoroastrians were known as of Ahura's creation by their creed and conduct. It should seem that they were Ahriman's offset to the humanity produced by the Good Principle. As the Daevas are positively said to be propagators of lies and unbelief, something of a speculative nature probably entered into the grounds of strife.

But that the sense of moral reprobation had at least as much to do with it as a difference of creed is evident from the stress laid on personal character, and the root of the dualism itself in thoroughly ethical contrasts. This service of Ahura, this hate of Ahriman, is a living fire; the symbol has mounted to the heavens of conduct. And if the infidel is hateful because he rejects the holy law, the

[1] *Yaçna*, xxxiii. 3; Spiegel.
[2] *Yacna*, xxxiii. 3; Haug.
[3] Ibid., xxxiii. 4; Spiegel.
[4] Ibid., xii.; Haug. Were they Turanian raiders?

law itself is holy only because it commands things manly, becoming, just, and helpful, — which things to hate and persecute *is* infidelity.

Let it be noted, then, that whatever the original germs in natural phenomena out of which this dualistic personification was evolved, its substance is the moral earnestness of personal will. As we go on to those portions of the Avesta which represent a later stage of it than Zoroaster's Gâthâs, we find the usual twofold evolution, of extensive application on the one hand, and intensive confinement on the other. The hosts of spiritual forces, good and evil, multiply around the central ideas of righteousness and iniquity; while the saving warfare tends to run down into the narrow ruts of petty ritualism. From the oldest and simplest Gâthâs down to the latest Yashts must have required nearly a thousand years of growth;[1] and not only do the details of religious personification accumulate to the last,[2] but the wearisome iteration of names and powers in the prayers and praises of the ritual, and of symbolical gestures and forms of purification, and the comminutia of religious service upon all the various kinds of waters and fires, come to surpass all other known rites, till the fire on the altar has survived the spirit of the rite, and Zoroastrianism remains a monument of the self-destructiveness of personal worship. But for a time this evolution of Dualism was a form of living purpose, pressing into universal meaning, and inflaming all Nature with its fiery spirit. The Aryan instinctively passed from the abstract to the concrete, and the moral quality was sure to identify itself with some material relation. In the Vendidâd (or law for expelling Daevas), still more in the Yashts (prayers and praises with legends), the objects and qualities at first blended in the substance of Ahura and his work became

[1] 1200–400 B.C. Haug: *Essays*, etc., 262–65.

[2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. and *Avesta*, Bd. iii., Einleitung, describes them all.

positive persons, — "multiplications" of him;[1] "beneficent immortals;" like the Vedic Âdityas. These were: Vohu-manô (the good mind); Asha-vahista (best purity);[2] Khshathra-vairya, wealth-giver (desired kingdom;)[3] Ârmaiti (spirit of earth, or obedience); "all of like mind, speech, action, like their father and maker; each beholding the soul of another, meditating the best life."[4] Add to these, Haurvatâṭ and Ameretâṭ (health and immortality), and we have, with Ahura himself, the sevenfold personality of righteousness, against which are drawn up Ahriman and his six spirits of evil, — will against will. Later, these powers that work good become distributed through the material world as presiding genii over animals, healing plants, remedies, metals, food, — all things from which benefit was derived.[5] The pure order of worship, embodied in the sacrifice, as Haoma, becomes a beautiful youth, who stands by Zoroaster in the flame to protect and teach him.[6] And the very sentences of holy writ (*Ahuna-vairya*) are no less than a divine being, forever victorious (*Honovar*). Then come hosts of Yazatas and Fravashis, genii, and spirits of the just, or the higher selves of good men, hovering over their conflict of good and evil, watchers and guardians of the right, — for these ideal souls are all on the side of good, and are invoked individually by the names of good men, by the hundred and thousand at a time, covering surely a long history, of which we know no more;[7] and against these, innumerable Daevas, Yâtus, Drujas, personified evil habits, diseases, monstrosities, or other horror in the phenomena of Nature or the imagination of man.[8] And the good spirits gather about the eastern mountain Albôrz (*Hara-berezaiti*), the world-centre,

[1] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 43.
[2] Haug, 306.
[3] Perfect king, Harlez.
[4] *Fravardin Yasht*, 83, 84.
[5] Darmesteter: *Haurvetâṭ et Ameretâṭ.*
[6] *Yaçna*, ix.
[7] See Boissier: *Religion Romaine*, ii. 131. *Fravardîn Yasht.*
[8] See Harlez: *Avesta*, i. 43.

whence Mithra rises with his horses of the Dawn to give light and safety to the world, where there is no night, nor cold, nor heat.[1] And the demons gather at *Arezûra*, the world of darkness, and the gate of hell.[2]

To these personal antagonisms correspond physical ones, — happy cultivated lands of believers, loved of the earth, and of Ahura, and helped by all useful creatures, the cow, the cock, the dog, the ox, on one side; and on the other, rude wastes, noxious creatures, dark and deadly forces, like storms and droughts, and scourges that can and must be expelled from the holy earth.

"Who rejoices the earth, O Ahura? — He who adorns it with grain and grass, and fruit-trees; who dries the moist lands, and waters the dry places."

"Whoso cultivates barley, cultivates virtue. When the wheat appears, the demons hiss; when sprouts come, they whine; when the stalks stand up, they cry; and when the grain is in ear, they flee in rage and despair."

"The earth must not lie untilled, but be ploughed, that she may be no longer childless, but produce bulls for man, and be their beautiful dwelling-place. Whoever tills her with both hands, to him she bears fruit, as a lover brings a son to her beloved. Whoever tills her not, to him she says, 'Thou shalt stand at another's gate begging food of those who have much.'"[3]

To destroy noxious insects is the penance for sins. Plant the wilderness, drain the marsh, turn streams into the sands, raise flocks and herds, is the battle-cry of this race that goes forth to possess the world and conquer evil by force of productive work. The sun in his victorious course, dispelling darkness and turning death to life, was the eternal monitor to this human war. And the helpers were ever at hand.

"Praise to thee, O holy Bull, who givest increase; praise to thee, gift of the Creator for the pure who are yet unborn! Rise, O Clouds,

[1] *Mihr-Yasht.* [2] *Vendidâd*, xix. 140–147.

[3] *Vendidâd*, iii. 11–14; 99–108; 79–95.

come! let the waters fall and spread abroad, thousand ten thousand-fold waves, to destroy disease and death! Rise, O Sun, with swift steeds over Albôrz, and illumine the creatures, on the path which Ahura hath made! The holy word says, 'I will consecrate thy birth and growth, thy body and strength; will make thee rich in children, in milk and fatness, in the cattle which roam the fields. Rise, O Moon, that holdest the germs of the herds![1] Rise, O splendid Stars [or, hid in depths], ye who hold the seed of the rain."[2]

The stars fight in their courses against Ahriman. The battle of the star Tistrya with the demon Apaosha (or the drought), as two horses, in the great sea Vouru-kasha,[3] is the old storm-myth of the Vedas, expanded and endowed with higher meaning. On the other hand, the later mythology, probably under Semitic influence, treats the seven planets in the old Chaldean fashion, as evil powers warring on the orderly constellations, which they seemed to invade like roving nomads with their ever-varying aspects and moods.[4] The earth itself, as the soul of the primal Bull, makes complaint to Ahuramazda that it is torn in pieces; to which Ahura replies that this (which means ploughing) is for the sake of harvests for man; and Zarathustra is bidden to teach this gospel.[5] Perhaps the soul of the Bull is not the earth, but the cattle themselves,[6] the useful brute creation, whose weal and woe are matters of profoundest interest for this religion. From the seed of the slain Bull (slain by Ahriman) come, in the later myth, the progenitors of all animals and plants.[7] Animals are pure or impure, by rigid rule; but their relation to good and evil is determined not so much by their moral as by their physical qualities; often by some obscure or incidental association, or by transference from the old Aryan myth of the elemental strife, — as in the case of the beaver, by the

[1] The dews.

[2] *Vendidâd*, xxi.

[3] The atmosphere (Darmesteter).

[4] *Minokhired*, viii. 1; *Bundehesh*, v.

[5] *Yaçna*, xxix.; Haug. The *Bundehesh* says it was comforted by being shown the Ferouer of Zarathustra (chap. iv.).

[6] This is Roth's view; the other is Haug's.

[7] *Bundehesh*, chap. x.

resemblance of his color to that of the light in the cloud;[1] or of the ant, by that of the cloud to an ant-hill, covering up a swarming life;[2] or of serpent-like animals in general, which inherit the bad name of the ancient cloud-serpent.[3] Ardvî-çûra, the strong healer, pours her waters for the relief of men and heroes. Saviors from disease and death are running streams and growing trees. The Bundehesh makes a mighty rain from heaven destroy evil creatures and Tistrya take the form of a white horse to remove the poisonous smell of their dead bodies.[4] But whatever the origin of these notions about certain classes of animals, such is the force of religious association that most of these impure creations are regarded by the later Pârsîs as really injurious.[5] As in other religions, traditional doctrine had to be reconciled with facts by feats of accommodation. The Bundehesh, which classes animals by external characters, — mostly arbitrary and accidental ones, — makes Ahura say to the falcon, who, as the lightning, is one of his creation: "You do Ahriman's will rather than mine, since you destroy so many smaller birds. But if I had not made you, Ahriman would have done so, and made you so great that no small bird could have lived."[6] Ahriman made the peacock a harmless bird; but it was only to show that he could make a good thing. All growing things were for man's use. The great waters, which the star Tistrya had to win from the evil demon by a terrible struggle, held the seeds of all plants, which fall in the rain upon the earth; and ten thousand of them are for the healing of as many diseases.[7] Haoma, death-dispelling, shall refresh the immortals. Every flower belongs to a

[1] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 281, — again the old storm-myth.

[2] See *Rig-Veda*, iv. 19, 9.

[3] Darmesteter; *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 282-83. These explanations, however apparently fanciful, have undoubtedly very strong foundations in mythological evolution.

[4] *Bundehesh*, vii.

[5] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 285.

[6] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 286; *Bundehesh*, xiv.

[7] *Bundehesh*, ix.

guardian god.[1] Seventeen kinds of water were purified by Zoroaster.[2] Into the great sea there run a hundred thousand golden conduits from the mountain at the earth's centre (*Hara-berezaiti*), and the earth is fertilized, in aid of human toil, by streams and seas.[3] " Slowly through ages rises the great mountain to the everlasting Light," and two thousand mountains spring from it to hold the earth firm.[4]

The paradise of the Avesta is the transfiguration of labor. It is a region of nine hundred kingdoms, full of cattle, beasts of burden, watch-dogs, and ruddy flames. The weapons of Yima are a golden spear, for piercing the earth; also a golden plough (perhaps shovel): with these he brings forth its fruits, expanding it threefold.[5] Work was the true " purification,"— live work of men on Nature. The facts of the world were not to be dodged; the senses were not to be ignored. The material was not put over against the spiritual as essentially evil. The good Ahura had made good things, and good laws for expanding their area by complying with their conditions and paying their price. There stands the world, visible as the fire that animates it,—our battle-ground to be redeemed from physical evils and from the moral evil which poisons and desolates it. This practical dualism was no dream, but sober earnest. Even long slumber is a demon to be spurned.[6]

" The cock lifts up his voice with every splendid dawn, and cries: 'Arise, ye men! praise the Best! destroy the Daeva that would put back the world into sleep! Long sleeping becomes you not. Turn not away from the three best things,—right thoughts, right words, right works; turn from the opposite of these!' 'Arise, 't is day,' says one to his bedfellow; 'who rises first, comes first to paradise. . . . Bring fire, and be blest with herds and offspring."[7]

[1] *Bundehesh*, xxvii. [2] Ibid., xxi. [3] Ibid, xiii. [4] Ibid., xii.
[5] *Vendidâd*, ii [6] *Vendidâd*, xi. 26–36. [7] *Vendidâd*, xviii. 36–60.

There shall be no asceticism; no self-torture; no self-contempt; no excessive fasting nor violent grief; nothing that can enervate the soul and body by whose toil the world shall be redeemed with the righteousness of man.

> "'T is an offence to the earth when the mourners for good people go about covered with dirt and loudly lamenting." "He who does not eat, has no strength to live according to right order, nor to work."[1] "To be helpless and enervated is the nature of a Druj (evil demon)."[2]

Here was a religion that could make heroes, but never a monk. It poured out imprecations on all that caused sickness or death. It erected its altars to medicine, and made healing the noblest art.[3] Thrita, the hero, is honored as the first physician, — as in the Vedas also, where he is, as might be supposed from the difference of the races, a saint, — and the Yazata Airyama is invoked to smite sickness and death.[4] "We praise thee, O Earth, our dwelling-place; and thee, the lord thereof, Ahuramazda! and may there be in my dwelling, summer and winter, whatever brings health and long life to cattle, to men, and the children of the pure."[5] It allowed no deed to be put off till the morrow which could be done to-day. It is wholly in the spirit of the earlier faith that the later Bundehesh says, "Remember, in the resurrection the lost ones will say to you, 'Why did you not teach me to do right, that so I might have been saved?'"

The household and the clan (town) must be purified by the same holy war.

[1] *Vendidâd*, iii. 36, 37; 112–114. Harlez's note on this seems unreasonable.

[2] *Vendidâd*, xviii. 72.

[3] The art of healing is made the subject of curious provisions. The surgeon shall make trial of his skill on the Daeva-worshipper first; and if he fails three times on the true worshipper, he shall not try again. His prices are fixed by law for men and beasts. Of the three kinds of physicians, users of knives, herbs, and holy spells, they who use the last, the sacred formulas, are the best. *Vendidâd*, vii. 94–120.

[4] *Vendidâd*, xx. 11; xxii.

[5] *Yaçna*, xvii. 53–55.

"May obstinacy be destroyed by obedience in this dwelling, discord by peace, avarice by generosity, vanity by wisdom, lies by truthfulness, that the Immortals may long bless it with good maintenance and friendly help! Never be the splendor extinguished of prosperity or progeny, that we may shine with purity, and see thee, O Ahura, attaining unto thee ('without end,' — *Harlez*)." "May there be given to this clan purity, dominion, profit, majesty, splendor!"[1]

Profoundest of all antagonisms was that of Life and Death; and in that centred the meaning of work. By his whole nature the Iranian was a reformer of the actual world, by creating whatever belonged to life, and destroying whatever belonged to death. Life was the fire he worshipped; living growth his ideal good. No sin more deadly than suicide.[2] Never should die the flame of his enthusiasm for consuming all morbific and fatal things, for turning the dead clod into living organism, for sweeping the lines of cultivation farther and farther through drifting sands and wide salt plains and snowy wastes, — like quickening Mithra, life-giving Haoma, and Ormuzd, source of fire. Death he put far from him, his absolute negation: no contact with its decay. Let the corpse be carried out, away from living earth, from living streams, from the abodes of the living, and committed to the open Dakhma, and the solvent of the desert air; let him that has touched it be impure, and the demon be expelled from member to member till she leaves his body as a fly.[3] For letting it remain, even though but a dog's, in the ground two years, there is no atonement forever.[4] Not for fifty years does the earth become pure again. Not till dust be turned to dust, does the very Dakhma bear to be approached by the pure.[5]

Death is the chief weapon of Ahriman. In the spirit of the whole faith, the later myth tells us that he begins by slaying the primeval creatures of Ahura, the man Gayômard

[1] *Yaçna*, lix. [2] Haug: *Essays*, etc., 313. [3] *Vendidâd*, viii. [4] *Vendidâd*, iii. 135. [5] *Vendidâd*, vii. 125, 127.

and the Bull, who have lived in heavenly bliss six thousand years,—a celestial union.[1] Thus is opened the long world-tragedy, by an act typical of the whole. But the seed of Gayômarḍ was purified by the sun, and the whole race of man was born from it, to wage war against the murderer till he should be utterly subdued.[2] Of a divine necessity, life overswept death just as good conquered evil; for both were one conception. "The soul of the righteous desires immortality and the strength that overwhelms the wicked,"[3] or "attains to immortality, but that of the wicked has everlasting punishment."[4] According to his choice in this life, the other holds him to the master to whom he belongs; he goes to the "house of hymns" (*Garô-demâna*) or the "house of destruction" (*Drûjô-demâna*), across the "bridge (*Chinvat*) of the judge" or "gatherer," where the questioning of his conscience concerning his life determines whether there be width enough for him to pass, and the angels or the demons take their own.[5] The wicked spirits tremble when they breathe the perfume of the spirit of the pure. "Vohu-manô rises from his golden throne in paradise, and asks, How, O pure One, hast thou come hither, from the mortal to the immortal life?"

"Joyously go the pure souls to the golden throne of Ahura and his immortal ones."[6] "For he who knows purity, knows Ahura; to such he is father, brother, friend."[7] "Teach me to know thy laws, O Ahura, that I may walk by the help of thy pure spirit, beholding and communing with thee."[8] Through one's own soul he is justified or condemned. A fragment from one of the latest writings of the faith (Mînôkhired), but fully in the spirit of the earlier ones, describes the soul of the pure after death as met on its way by a sweet wind from the mid-day, in

1 *Bundehesh*, xv.
2 *Bundehesh*, xv.
3 *Yaçna*, xliv. 7; Harlez; Spiegel.
4 *Yaçna*, xlv. 7; Haug.
5 *Vendidâd*, xix. 95, 96, 107.
6 *Vendidâd*, xix. 108; 103, 104.
7 *Yaçna*, xliv.; Haug, xlv.
8 *Yaçna*, xxxiii., xxxiv.

which comes the law of his own character, as a beautiful and stately maiden, who declares to him his own good words, thoughts, and deeds, and their heavenly rewards, and leads him to the divine ford, bestowed at Ahura's own command; and the soul of the wicked, met in like manner by his own law, as an evil odor, which brings him to the great darkness without beginning, and the poison from Ahriman's hands.[1] How Christian dogma is here anticipated!

It is noticeable also that the parallel with Christian Dualism is carried out in the creation of an evil humanity by Ahriman, in opposition to the good;[2] only the curse is not a doom of depravity on the whole race, but the creation of wicked portions outside of the law. The war of elements in the old storm-cloud must transfuse the life of mankind and of the race. This appears in epos and history as the strife of Iran with Turan. Such the unceasing warfare for possession of the soul of man.

Immortality, in the Avesta, is not involved in transmigration like that of Brahmanism, nor in *nirvâna*, the Buddhist's refuge from transmigration; it does not tend to absorption in Ahura; it does not mingle man with the brute, nor merge him with the god. It is distinctly and completely personal; the beginning of that relation to the future which has given Christianity its hold upon the Aryan world. All the tragedy, all the poetry, which has gathered around the conception of the individual as a boundless possibility of good or evil, not in this life only, but for everlasting existence, has its germ in the religion of Iran. The Jews did not come out of their gloomy and shadowy

[1] See Spiegel's *Khordah-Avesta*, xxxviii. The *Bundehesh* says that at the judgment "every one will see his own works, good or evil, as clear as white from black; each receives the reward of his doings; the good weep for the bad, and the bad for themselves." (Chap. xxxi.) Justi.

[2] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 287. But the later mythology derives all races, in all the seven quarters of the world, as well as all the strange amorphous kinds of men with which imagination had peopled the wastes of Central Asia, from the seed of Gayômard.

Sheôl till Persia had taught them in the exile this idea of the permanence of individual being; nor did Christianity add anything to the positiveness of this older faith in a future existence.

Man's infinite worth divides the universe and draws all living powers to the one or the other side. On him, their central sum and purpose, the poles of creation turn. And it is no mere strife of flesh and blood, but one of spirit against spirit waged in the world of moral volition. Here is a race that converts its sensualities into ideas that it may master them in their essence. It is will and it is purpose that infects or purifies the elements; and nothing shall move man's desire or dread in them but their reflex of his own spiritual attractions to the light or to the dark. He surrounded himself with legions of intensely active wills, rank over rank, sphere beyond sphere, penetrating and animating Nature, giving significance to its forces and forms; not moving in the play of harmony before the outward eye, like the gods of the æsthetic Greek; not in mystical illusion, like the passive Hindu's, — but arrayed against each other, like the warring hosts of Milton's Christian epic (which is but a modern Avesta), the rent republic of the spiritual universe in arms. The Platonic *τὸ δαιμόνιον*, the immeasurable ideal space through which the perfection of deity gradually descended into union with the human, was here brimming and seething with the deadly conflict of opposing wills. The Iranian Satan was no poor monster with nostrils fire-breathing, with horns and hoofs of beast; no Lucifer fallen from heaven to play the rebel against God, on a throne of desperation and under omnipotent thunderbolts of doom,— but an invisible Presence, armed with personal power equal to his hate of good, infecting alike the outward and the inward worlds. The righteous purpose only could resist and overcome him; and its weapons were threefold.

1. The spirit of Ahura: —

"O Father over the herds and over the just through his love of justice, over the pure creation through its purity: Thou manifest giver of good, whose greatness, goodness, and beauty we desire (to augment[1])! May he protect us, direct us, by [our] purity, activity, liberality, and tenderness, with the fire of Ahura."[2] "Inquire of me, with a right spirit, — of me, the Creator, who is ready to answer; so shall it be well with thee, and thou shalt attain to purity if thou seekest me."[3]

2. The word or law of Ahura (*Măthra-çpeñta*): meaning, first, the revelation through Zoroaster, probably the five Gâthâs; then the three sacred formulas, especially Ahuna-vairya embodying the praise of obedience and purity, and succor to the poor, as the kingdom of God,[4] which "was before the heavens or the earth, the righteous or the unrighteous powers," — and of which the recitation should, like the Hindu Gâyatrî, bring salvation; but the taking away of any part of it, in utterance, banishment as far from heaven as the world is wide:[5] and as the priestly ritualism increased, the efficacy of words to save became extended to a host of formulas for invocation and service, until the Persian Bible, in common with all Bibles, became a missal of superstition; and last, came the sacred authority of spoken truth to punish and destroy lies. A word is the first of sanctions which are called *mithras;* and of a word in this sense Mithra is the guardian and avenger. "Break not a promise (*mithra*), neither with a just man, nor an unbeliever," — for it is for the good and the bad alike. He who lies to Mithra destroys the whole land;

[1] Harlez. [2] *Yaçna*, lvii. 10–12; Spiegel.

[3] *Vendidâd*, xviii. 18–20. All the powers, symbolical and spiritual, consecrated by the traditional faith as belonging to Ahura, were instrumental in his aid. Thus the *Yashts* say (xiii. 77) that Ahriman is driven back by Âtar and Vohu-manô, or fire and good thought; as in the Vedas by Indra and Prayer; that *Asha-vahista* fire keeps guard over him in hell; that the multitudinous Ferouers watch the wall which Ahura has built around the holy mountain.

[4] Spiegel; *Khordah-Avesta*, Bd. iii 3. [5] *Yaçna*, xix. 12–15.

slays as many as a hundred evil doers.[1] "For Mithra cannot be deceived. Those who deal not false with him, he brings out of all their trouble; from the arms of liars he takes away might, from their feet strength, from their eyes sight, from their ears hearing. Mithra, who watches with ten thousand eyes, all-knowing, may not be deceived."[2] Haug has well said that "the angel *Rashnu-razishta*, the rightest righteousness," whom the Yasht in his praise describes as present in all beings, places, and forms, represents the eternal laws of Nature and morality, like the Themis of the Greeks.[3]

3. Work: the sacred efficacy of labor; the praying, with the hands fulfilling the prayer, — as real three thousand years ago as to us to-day. The sweat of the brow was no curse to these builders of their heaven out of the conditions of the earth; no bitter fruit of a Fall, as with the Hebrew. Praise and prayer went with it, — service of God, redemption of man. Yima widened out the world, filled his paradise with cattle, beasts of burden, busy, happy men; and the Earth answered his prayer and the stroke of his spear, or plough, with her increase; and at command of Ahura, he drove his herds to milder climes, and bore the seeds of plants, and with work of hands and heel made a golden land, where harvests did not fail, where was no wrangling, no beggary, nor falsehood, poverty, nor sickness, nor ravenous creature of Ahriman, — all before his bitter fall.[4] So Egypt ascribed the plough to Osiris, the Greeks to Ceres, the Chinese to mythic kings; the Vedic Hindus to the Açvins, "sons of the sky;" the Scythians thought it fell from heaven.[5] It was said that Hesiod, in his sentence, "the idle are enemies of the gods," set a new law in place of the law of Oriental society. But Iran disproves the assertion. To

[1] *Mihr-Yasht*, 1. [2] *Mihr-Yasht*, 6. [3] *Essays*, etc., 205.
[4] *Vendidâd*, ii. [5] *Herod.* iv. 5.

the Mazdean belongs the honor of having clearly and practically conceived, through the moral and religious earnestness of his grasp on the stern conditions of life, that *divine* work depends on human,[1] — not only on man's hand-work, but the praise and prayer which, while fulfilling the law, assures its growth. "Grow, O Haoma, through my word."[2]

The whole of this spiritual armor against evil is summed up in one sentence, the ever-recurring formula, — "Rightness of thought, word, and deed;" often called "purity,"[3] and constantly associated with forms and rites of purification, which are minutely detailed for priest and people in the Vendidâd chapters, but by the very terms of the formula clearly centring in inward aspiration and moral endeavor. Neither thought, word, nor deed, alone suffices; but their integrity in the will. "Turn not away from the well-considered thought, the well-spoken word, the well-done action."[4] "Call him the true fire-priest, who the whole night seeks guidance from a righteous understanding, fit for the bridge of judgment, and obtaining the life, righteousness, and perfection of paradise [the best life]." "Inquire, O Just One, of me, who am the Creator most bounteous and wise, and readiest to answer, — inquire, and it shall be well with thee."[5] For indeed "purity" is no less than Ahuramazda himself, who is always called the "Pure One," and can be found only by the will that is at one with his. A perpetual warfare to redeem to its original goodness as his creation what his moral and physical opposite had poisoned, involved prescribed methods of procedure, based at first, there can be no doubt, on

[1] See Tistrya and Fravardîn *Yashts;* Spiegel. [2] *Yaçna*, x. 11.

[3] *Asha* — commonly rendered "purity," which was applied at once to gods and men, and which expressed at first the cosmic order, the religious norm and truth of things — became the vague expression of moral order; and the *Ashavan* man became the good man, who fulfilled the duties of the law, etc. Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 18.

[4] *Vendidâd*, xviii. 15-17, Haug; 41-42, Spiegel.

[5] Ibid., xviii. 6, 7, Haug; 15-20, Spiegel.

obvious relations to the object in view; and even as they went on multiplying by mere prescription, they still represented at least the spirit and purpose of the Being through them adored and served. They were very much concerned in protecting against the contact of dead bodies. As the fire of life was the very body of virtue, so death was abhorred and accursed as the symbol of evil. Diseases, and all apparently abnormal physical conditions, or those which were accompanied with startling or mysterious phenomena, were also sources of impurity. It would be unprofitable to trace the various kinds or grounds of purification, which were multiplied by the immediate relation of religion to the bodily condition of the physical world. But all purification has value only as it helps to purity in thought, word, and deed. The very formula betrays the essence of virtue to have been truth, earnestness, the hate of lies, the love of the real. And this, which marks the whole history of Iranian belief, from the oldest Gâthâs to the latest Achæmenian inscription, is the natural expression of that peculiar sense of dignity and worth in the *person* which enters the historic field with Iranian *Will*.

The Avesta has no theory of the origin of evil other than as a fact involved in that freedom of choice which belongs to personality. Ahriman *chooses* falsehood before truth. It is only in the latest Pârsî books that he is represented as the result of doubts in the Supreme Mind, — a notion which shows the persistence of the same theory. Yima's fall from paradise is due to his fall from truth, under temptation of Ahriman. Mashya and Mashyâna, the first man and woman, — according to the same later mythology, mixed with Chaldean and Semitic traditions, — at first seeing the truth, and aspiring to do like the Yazatas, soon freely yield to the temptation of the Pârsî Satan to believe the lie that he was the creator. They fall into delusions about eating and drinking, which deprave

their bodies; are driven to searching out inventions for their support; lose their love, and dwell apart, and then sacrifice to Daevas.[1] Seven couples proceeding from them give birth to different nations, while this Pârsî Adam and Eve become "like unto demons, and their souls will be in hell" till the resurrection.[2] Their descendants go back, reversing their track, to the pure life which needs no food; and when Sosyosh, the redeemer, comes, all is restored by the ordeal of fire.[3] This very artificial story is made up of foreign elements, and has obviously no philosophical value. It is significant only as showing the persistence of the old Iranian instinct to trace all human experience to the free personality of man.

Here, then, is the earliest affirmation of human liberty as the substance of a religion, — the first genuine escape of man from the dominion of Fate, and introduction to the law, life, and progress of individual and personal energy.

In this way the Iranian solved the problem of evil, stern and inevitable then as now; pointing out and entering the path of solution which all religions that succeeded him have followed. He did not ignore evil; tried neither to think it away by abstraction, nor to hide it under a heap of interests and pursuits. He bravely met it in his own will and in the world; pursued it through soul and sense, to the very bounds of his thought, battling it down with Ahuramazda's purity of thought and life, and Yima's dagger of work.

Is it correct to define the Avesta-religion as Dualism? That is, does it consciously affirm two equal forces, coeval in being, and eternally at war? The language certainly implies this, since the Good and the Evil principles are even called "primeval twins"[4] in the oldest Gâthâs,

[1] *Bundehesh*, chap. xv.; Justi.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Bundehesh*, chap. xxxi.; Justi.
[4] *Yaçna*, xxx. 3.

ascribed to Zoroaster himself. Nothing could be more strongly stated than the intrinsic antagonism of these powers.[1] It is difficult to understand how Haug can reconcile with the whole tenor of these writings his theory that the older portions at least are purely monotheistic, in the sense that the two "minds," good and evil, are both included in the conception of Ahuramazda; and still further, that the one represents the real, and the other the unreal,[2] — mere "destruction or lie" (*Druj*),—these two being "united in the one God" as his "two spirits."[3] The passages which Haug translates in accordance with this theory are differently rendered by Harlez, Spiegel, and Bleeck, who also agree with each other.[4] Zoroaster's theology, in Haug's view, recognizes one Creator of light and darkness, good and evil, like the Hebrew Jahveh;[5] and is to be distinguished from his philosophy of evil, which was dualistic. The distinction is a rational one, though in the absence of certainty whether the specific Gâthâs on which it is based are rightly ascribed to Zoroaster, and in view of the disagreement of translators, it is doubtful if we are yet justified in making it. As to Jehovah, there is a distinction to be made. Hebrew and Iranian conceptions differ in respect of the focal distance of deity, as seen by man, — a distance so great in the one case (Hebrew), that the act of creating evil could not be supposed to involve anything analogous to human responsibility, especially responsibility to human reason or conscience, on a positively unlimited will, which might at its pleasure have transformed evil into good, or right into wrong; a distance in the other case (Iranian) so imperceptible, that to ascribe evil to God would be, first, to make Him directly responsible for that which it was His

[1] See, especially, *Vendidâd*.
[2] *Essays*, etc., p. 303.
[3] *Yaçna*, xix. 9.
[4] *Yaçna*, xix. 9; xlv. 2; Haug.
[5] II. Samuel xii. 11; Isaiah xlv. 7; Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 302.

very life to break down and destroy, as His essential opposite and innate foe; and next, to contradict that present character by which alone He was known to man. For the Hebrew, good and evil, moral and physical, could more readily be ascribed to one creative source, because creation was, if not exactly production out of nothing, yet approaching to it, since the thing created was somehow external to the Creator; but for the Iranian, to whom creation was simply a spiritual self-affirmation, distinctly significant of its maker,[1] good and evil were expressions of positively antagonistic wills, and could hardly as such be thrown back upon one and the same person. The attempt to do so was made in later, probably Sassanian, times (fifth century of Christianity), under Semitic influence, doubtless Babylonian,[2] and is still adhered to by the Pârsîs. Schemes prevailed deriving the world from Time, Fate, Light, Space. Both Ormuzd and Ahriman were made to spring from Zrvan-akarana, "Boundless Time," — a substance sufficiently vague to be but semi-personal, if not impersonal, — in hopes to reconcile the older Dualism with a distincter demand for unity in the religious conception. A partial basis for this idea was, according to Haug, in the mistranslation of a passage in which it is said that the weapons to smite Ahriman were "made *in* boundless time."[3] But the history of the doctrine points to a deeper meaning. And although Haug considers Dualism to have been merely the philosophy, and monotheism the theology, of the older Avesta, he cannot but think that a philosophy which reconciles itself with monotheism by making a good

[1] "The idea of creation is expressed in the Avesta by the root dâ, to institute, *poser.*" Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 23.

[2] See Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, English edition, p. 230. So Spiegel: *Studien über das Zendavesta* (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, v. 221). Rapp (in the same, xix. 83). Rawlinson, who identifies Zrvan-akarana with Bel Ziru-banit of the Assyrian inscription (Jour. Royal Asiatic Soc. xv. p. 245, note 2). Pictet: *Les Origines Indo-Européennes*, ii. 717. Carrè: *L'Ancien Orient*, ii. p. 375.

[3] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 24.

spirit create a bad one, in such way that the latter becomes a "twin spirit" with itself, is a speculation on the question of origin, which we should hardly expect to find in the early stages of a religion, or even in a monotheistic reformer at such a stage. It is only an advanced and refined monotheism that would abstract the positive quality of evil, especially moral evil, so completely as to subsume it under the plans and methods of a perfect being, — for example, upon ontological grounds, such as the necessity of imperfection in all finite processes. Hebrew monotheism was by no means consistent. Yet the Hebrews never ascribed human passions and vices to Jahveh, except so far as they could justify these to themselves by their nature or effects.[1]

For myself, I do not think Zoroastrianism shows any signs whatever of a philosophy of evil, any more than Judaism. It is a moral and spiritual protest against evil; and it uses the phraseology of a twofold creation simply to concentrate and antagonize the two sides of actual experience, behind which it goes not.

I agree with Haug so far as this, that I do not find pure Dualism in the *religion* of the Avesta; but still less do I find one good God dividing himself through creation into twin antagonistic principles. The Avesta affirms Ahura as superior, and Ahriman as inferior.

1. There can be little doubt that Ahura is the Iranian representative, even genealogically, of the old Aryan Varuṇa,[2] supreme Lord (*Asura*), and omniscient (*viçvavedas*) ordainer of the laws of the universe and of the moral order, whose eyes behold every deed of man, and whose bonds (or nooses) are the inevitable penalties of

[1] In the earlier of the Jehovah passages referred to, the word "evil" is not used positively, but with reference to its quality as penalty inflicted by Jehovah, and therefore as good; and even in the later, as the antithesis to "peace," it signifies trouble, which is here referred to God, thus changing it into blessing,

[2] In Indo-European period, as Varana (Gr. Ouranos). See the author's *India*, chapter on "The Hymns."

his sin.[1] The same qualities and symbols belong to both; they are both associated with Mithra (the sun); both are gods of fire, parents of the *Atharvan*, or personified sacrificial flame; both "masters of all the gods." Each is chief of a band of seven immortal powers, — the one Âdityas, the other Amesha-çpeñtas. Varuṇa was the far depth of space, the rounding heaven, the limits of thought and power; and thus, and thus only, naturally associated with the mystery of night, as well as with the orderly movement of the heavenly bodies, which night in fact revealed. Now it was easy for the Iranians to make this grandest of the old Asuras their supreme Ahura; but it was scarcely possible that they should have made him the source of Ahriman, since it was precisely this absoluteness of his moral being that determined them to choose him from among all the old deities as their supreme God. He is the unity of truth and light; he is light because truth. And this is precisely the significance of Ahura. The very essence of Ahriman, on the contrary, is the unity of falsehood and darkness; he is the one because the other. It is true that Varuṇa was also associated with the darkness of night; true also that there were aspects in his laws of penalty which fear might have turned into signs of hate: the "nooses of Varuṇa" were doubtless the terror of the wicked. His anger is indeed often spoken of.[2] "As the night sun," says a commentator, "he is even regarded as the god of evil."[3] But evil from Varuṇa could only have been the penal sufferings of the sinner, — the sign, not of moral evil in the god himself, but of righteousness. He is even called merciful to the sinner, and supplicated as providential care.[4] There is nothing to hint of Ahrimanic quality in Varuṇa's bonds of moral order, more than in his grand paths in the nightly sky.

[1] *Rig-Veda*, viii. 42, 1; ii. 27, 10; vii. 86. See also Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 42.
[2] See "Hymns to Varuna," in Langlès' *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 386. *Rig-Veda*, vii. 86.
[3] Langlès' *Bib. Orient.*, p. 126.
[4] *Rig-Veda*, vii. 86.

2. I observe that evil is everywhere conceived as inferior and secondary; and so far from being commanded to worship it as he does good, the believer is to hate, spurn, and destroy it. If it were a part of Ahura's own being, that could not be. There is no such mysticism in Zoroaster as to inculcate the service of one spirit of God by destroying another spirit of God. Religion is ever the service of the ideal. But it is idle to imagine that which a man hates and fights through what he holds higher and nobler than it, to be his ideal, — in other words, to be his God. He may worship many gods, and some in fear of their power, as the Vedic Aryans did; but when he has gathered up the forces of the universe into two principles, — the one in accordance with his sense of duty and right, and his idea of constructive good; and the other utterly and absolutely in opposition thereto, — and believes himself called to the extirpation of the one and the exaltation and triumph of the other, it is not easy to see how he can be said to believe the two to be equal principles, or to worship the one as well as the other, or the one as a modification or expression of the other. That only which he holds highest and best, to which he gives his service, is his God.

Now the Avesta is wholly in accordance with this rule. Ahura is the first to create. Ahriman creates, not independently, but only in opposition to Ahura; or, if Haug's translation be correct, creates "non-reality" only.[1] Ahura makes good things, with calm, full consciousness of their inherent goodness and of their good issue. Ahriman makes evil things, under a delusion about their value, and learns their evil destiny only when it comes upon them. He is powerless when strongly opposed. His essential weakness, disappointment, and despair get the better of him on all momentous occasions, — as, for instance, the birth of Zoroaster,[2] when he flies with all his hosts to bury

[1] *Yaçna*, xxx. 3, 4.

[2] *Vendidâd*, xix. 147.

himself in hell. He cannot prevent the good genii from striking him and driving away his powers.[1] Even in the later writings,—in which the two powers are so equalized that the one is throned in eternal light, the other in primeval darkness, — Ahura, by superior knowledge, cheats Ahriman into a truce for nine thousand years before their war should begin, thereby securing to himself the victory, anticipating him by creating the world of matter and man between their two realms, as a bulwark, and then, repeating the formula, *Ahuna-vairya*, so terrifies him at the discovery of what he has conceded that he hides himself for three thousand years.[2] Down to the tenth century, and the heresy of Anselm of Canterbury, the Christian doctrine of the Atonement affirmed a similar stretch of cunning practised by Christ upon the Devil to deprive him of his legitimate rights to the soul of man. Everything in the Avesta points to nonentity as the end to which Zoroastrianism would pursue its evil principle.[3] Some later Persian sects conceive of its relation to the good simply as that of the shadow to the light.[4] Cudworth[5] quotes Plutarch and Theopompus to prove that Ahriman was inferior and transient; and affirms that the "Ditheists" (Magi) started with "a firm persuasion of the essential goodness of the Deity," but to explain the evil in the world had "to suppose another animalish principle,[6] self-existent, or an evil god." Ahura loves the good, and so creates it. But Ahriman exists only by negation, and only creates evil because he hates the good, and wishes

[1] Spiegel: *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. p. 123. Tahmurath binds and rides him in form of a horse (*Yasht*, xv. 12; xix. 29). He is powerless when sacrifice is made to the air (*Yasht*, xv. 56). Zoroaster "reaches him against his will" (*Yasht*, xvii. 19).

[2] *Bundehesh*, chap. i.; Justi. See also Spiegel: Avesta, iii. l. lii.

[3] *Bundehesh*, chap. i.

[4] Hyde: *Veterum Persarum . . . Religionis Historia*, cap. xxii.

[5] *Intellectual System*, i. 354, 379.

[6] Plutarch (*Isis* and *Osiris*, xlvi.) distinguishes Zoroaster from those who "make two rival gods," as "calling the father God, the other Daemon." So Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, xiii. 4.

to kill it; and this, says the Bundehesh, is his eternal darkness.[1] He is the god of negation. This anticipation of the highest sense of civilization, which sees in moral evil, as Goethe presents it in Mephistopheles, "the spirit that denies," and in physical evil the dark force that waits to be mastered by the light, shows how profoundly rooted in human intuition is the reality of moral order, and the unity of the moral and physical universe. Evil, then, is here not God; it is the Adversary. It is not original, but secondary. It follows up good with its opposite, and that in the minutest details, but in a merely mechanical and imitative way; not as representing the essential possibility of misuse and disproportion in every power of good, but putting out something else as its external antagonist over against it. Its logic is futile and helpless, so far as it has any, and amounts to mere contradiction, which is not only not discussion, but the most contemptible form of resistance; and though succeeding so far as to seduce men to their destruction, is doomed to essential failure, having no root in the original purpose of things. Though without known beginning, it must have an end.

The Avesta has, I repeat, no philosophy of evil. Ahriman is regarded as a mere purpose of destruction, without even so much as the ulterior end of pleasure in destroying others; at least we find no emphasis laid on such motive, so little reflective reason is there in this religion of pure personal will. How evil originated, how it is related to the universal good, how it could have power to resist this, do not enter into the question. The moral conflict has become all-absorbing, and speculative problems are barred out, or postponed for the tremendous realities of the conscience; everything centres in the divided will, and all that can be done is to expand the experience to cosmical proportions, as a conflict of opposing wills.

[1] Chap. i.

And these forces are dealt with simply as actual beings, not as data for theogony or philosophy. But it is no more possible that the two should have been regarded as equal gods, than that the evil mind in the worshipper should have seemed to him to have equal rights with the good. There was but one Supreme God; and the simple point for us to consider as between them, is, which did this religion honor and trust most, which does the law-book pronounce fittest to be trusted, mightiest for good, worthiest to be loved and pursued? The answer is: it nowhere concedes to Ahriman one attribute of deity, and nowhere refuses one to Ahura. Take for instance creative power: —

"I ask of Thee, tell me the right, O Ahura! How arose the best (present) life? The beneficent spirit, O righteous Mazda, is the guardian to ward off every evil from man: the friend for all life (worlds[1]).

"I ask of Thee, etc. Who was the father and creator of righteousness in the beginning? Who established the sun and the stars in their way? Who causes the moon to wax and wane? These, with what is known else, I desire to know.

"I ask of Thee, etc. Who upholds the earth and the skies that they fall not? Who made the waters and the trees? Who is in the winds and storms that they so swiftly run? Who, O Mazda, has created the good (spiritual[2]) minded beings?

"I ask of Thee, etc. Who created, perfect, the light and the dark? Who the sleep and the activity [watching]? Who, morning, noon, and night, and the laws which tell the priest his duties?

"I ask of Thee, etc. Who has created the Bactrian home (devised wisdom[3]) with its properties (the kingdom[4])? Who fashioned, by weaving motion, the excellent son out of the father? (Who has rendered the son dear to the father?[5]) (Created the love of the father to the son?[6]) To know these things, I approach thee, O Mazda, bounteous giver of all good, creating all beings![7]

"Ahura: who created us, who formed us, who keeps us.[8]

[1] Harlez. [2] Ibid. [3] Spiegel. [4] Ibid.
[5] Harlez. [6] Spiegel.
[7] *Yaçna*, xliv.; Haug, xliii.; Spiegel and Harlez. [8] *Yaçna*, i. 4.

"Ahura: for whose kingdom, power, and mighty works, we praise him above all beings worthy to be adored, who dwell with our herds to protect them. The Fravashis of the pure, we praise; the best purity, fairest, immortal, glorious, containing all that is good; the good spirit, the good kingdom, the good law, and the pure wisdom.[1]

"The clouds and mountains;[2] all which the eye beholds through the good mind; sun, stars, and morn which ushers in the day, — all move to thy praise, O righteous Ahura! And I with my mouth will sing thy praise, in truth, as long as I have breath. Let the creator aid with good mind all that increaseth right conduct, by his will."[3]

Zarathustra asked Ahuramazda: "Most munificent spirit, which was the word that thou spakest to me, which was before the heavens, before the water or earth, or animals, or trees, or fire, or before the righteous, before the demons and savage men (Daevas and impious men[4]), before the whole material world?"[5]

Then for absolute and pure trust, take the first of the Gâthâs: for the all-embracing names of Ahuramazda, the Ormazd-Yasht. Ahriman has no honor but the fear and hate his purpose inspires. And though the earlier books have left the issue of this great war to be inferred from this spirit of zeal and victory which animates them, yet the later writings have worked out the triumph of the good principle in a very positive eschatology. The Gâthâs hint this; they give Ahuramazda the place of law-giver and final judge over all men. "Creator of blessing for the evil as well as the good, they only who, taught by his spirit, increase the purity of men, will come to thy kingdom,"[6] or "shall be taught thy law."[7] "Rewarding words and deeds, thou appointest evil to the wicked and blessing to the good, through thy holiness, at the last end of the creation."[8] The Yashts, of later origin, describe the effect of the coming of a prophet (*Çaoshyañç*) at the last day, "to

[1] *Yaçna*, xxxvii.; Spiegel and Harlez.
[2] Luminaries; Haug.
[3] *Yaçna*, xlix.; Harlez.
[4] *Yaçna*, xix.; Harlez.
[5] Ibid., Haug.
[6] Ibid., xlii. 4, 6; Spiegel.
[7] Ibid., Harlez.
[8] Ibid., 5; Harlez.

make life everlasting, incorruptible, full of vigor, when the dead shall rise again, and imperishable righteousness fill the world; when the evil one (or ones) will disappear, and his whole seed perish."[1] Similar testimony to this victory of Ahura, the destruction of Ahriman, and the resurrection of the dead to immortality, is given by Plutarch[2] and by Theopompus[3] (fourth century B.C.). To this end of the struggle of three thousand years many prophets bring their aid, from Zoroaster to Sosyosh, all of whom have clear foreknowledge of the predestined triumph of good. According to the Bundehesh, latest of all, fifteen of these male saints and heroes, and as many female, will return at this glorious day and share its wondrous regenerative work. The purification by fire shall burn away all the dross of evil, even in Ahriman and the Serpent; hell shall fall to dust and disappear, and its place be filled with purity and bliss. The symbolic Bull and the mystic Haoma of the old faith will also reappear as the consummation of all sacrifice, bringing immortal life and becoming immortal food for all, and Ahura dispense to men imperishable garments and eternal bliss.[4]

In all this the doctrine of bodily resurrection is of course implied, and it seems quite superfluous to inquire after evidences of its antiquity. The personality consisted of soul and body, and their union was implied in all personal existence. So Jewish Rabbis taught: it is impossible for the dead to "rise" out of graves except in bodies. In the oldest Gâthâs the resurrection idea does not seem to have been worked out, and the simple, immediate spiritual judgment of the Chinvaṭ bridge precludes the sleep in dust which that idea involves after death.[5] The Zamyâd-Yasht

[1] *Zamyâd-Yasht*, 11, 12.
[2] *Isis* and *Osiris*.
[3] See Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 8, 9.
[4] *Bundehesh*, xxxi.; Justi.
[5] The beautiful description of the spirit after death, led on the third night across the Bridge and the Holy Mountain to the world of Ahura, — "the pure souls go contented, to the golden thrones of Ahura," etc. (*Vendidâd*, xix.), — shows that this belief continued on to a later period.

perhaps intimates a visible immortality on this earth. I cannot but believe that the primitive Zoroastrian, like the Vedic, faith gave the spirits of good men a body of fire, while the wicked were invested with symbolical bodies of darkness and decay. But so closely was soul related to sense, and sense to life, in Iranian conceptions, that these vague notions gradually gave way to that of a purely physical resurrection; and this involved a delay of judgment till the end of the world, when the dispersed atoms could at once be miraculously restored to every personal form.[1] The Bundehesh enters into an argument, which is substantially the model of the Christian, to show that even this was possible to the omnipotence of Ahuramazda,[2] and declares that each is to rise so unmistakable that men will recognize each other's bodies and souls, and ask with earnest anxiety concerning their conduct since they met in life; the very period of life in which each died shall appear in him; the child's dust rise as youth, the man's as a man; and in the heavenly state, where no more children shall be born, each family shall keep its earthly form intact. It is difficult to believe that this final resurrection doctrine had much practical influence, even if it existed, during the period of the Avestan compositions, when there seems to have been a constant sense of the immediate presence, at least, of the *Fravashis*, or spirits of the pure, as of those who had already passed the Chinvaṭ bridge into their reward.[3] In Christianity the same vague inconsistency of sentiment prevails concerning the state of souls after death; on the one hand, they are thought of as conscious, if not present, and as already passed to eternal judgment; and on the other, as awaiting the last trump to rise from the dead at the end of the world. The con-

[1] Rabbins also same. [2] *Bundehesh*, xxx. 1.; Justi.

[3] *Yaçna*, xxiv. 14; xxvi. 34. But in the *Bundehesh*, Ahura creates the Fravashis before mankind; chap. ii.

fusion of blind instincts concerning a state as yet unknown of course explains this inconsistency in both religions; but in both the determination of every man's future throughout all time is held to belong to the just and righteous God, and resurrection and judgment alike to prove His triumph over the powers of evil.

A conflict like this could end only in the utter destruction, or the perfect conversion, of the powers of evil. Both these issues are asserted in the Zoroastrian writings, the latter only in the latest. The earlier are too much absorbed in the internecine battle itself to dogmatize as to the way in which the triumph should be used, or to speculate as to the conditions absolutely requisite to the permanent suppression of evil-will. Heaven for the good, hell for the wicked; the corporeal world of Nature and man between these two, and the battle raging for the mastery of every soul, — this was all. Both these spheres are said to be without beginning, and immortality is affirmed of heaven; while hell is nowhere said to be without end.[1] Had evil been regarded as a principle only, or as simply a fact, there would have been room for a philosophy of its origin, function, and end;[2] but as it was gathered up into a personal will, actuated by personal hate, and antagonized by equal

[1] The only passage in all the older Zend-Avesta which seems to assert eternal punishment is one where it is said of the idolatrous priests that they are so hardened that they ought to avoid the Bridge of Judgment, "to remain forever in the dwelling-place of destruction." (*Yaçna*, xlvi. 11; Haug.) This can hardly serve to prove the dogma of eternal punishment in the absence of every other proof. Yet Carré so thinks (*L'Ancien Orient*, ii. 326).

[2] According to the *Bundehesh*, the interpretation of which is extremely uncertain, the good and evil shall at last be raised with their bodies, to pass for three days (after separation according to their characters) through liquid fire of the molten earth, and so be purified; the end whereof, either by the destruction of the very bad, at all events by a sifting process, or rather distilling, by which all evil should be worked off, shall be a pure world, without stain of evil mind. That this can mean that the worst people, those who have been already in *Dûzakh* (hell) for ages, should in three days become perfectly pure, is incredible: the annihilation interpretation is more probable. And it is equally improbable that all should come into the same bliss, since a new and more perfect heaven is said to be created for the good. (See *Bundehesh*, xxxi.; Justi.) The *Dabistan* gives traditions of Zoroaster from the Mobads, one of which is that he said, "God has commanded me, 'Say thou to mankind that they are not to abide in hell forever; when their sins are expiated, they are delivered out of it.'" — *Dabistan*, i. 363.

hate on the part of another will, the question was simply one of victory, and the interest purely personal and instant. And so it continued after the religion became accepted and instituted, and leisure was afforded for conceiving it as a whole, with all the final consequences it involved.[1]

The Avesta asks not, What is the meaning of evil; what ends, spiritual and progressive, it is bound to serve; what its future in human and finite conditions; what its justification as an element of growth? No such questions can enter this purely personal system; but rather, What shall finally be done with these wicked wills, and with this primal wicked will when conquered, to insure their total suppression? Zoroastrianism, then, could not be satisfied with eternal punishments; it would purify the whole universe, — and such a hell would immortalize impurity. Zoroaster would utterly suppress evil, — and such a hell would be an endless demonstration that the evil-will stood fast, even in chains. It was too much in earnest not to wish the terrible strife to end. There were only two ways to end it: either to annihilate the hostile will, or to convert it. The interpreters of the Bundehesh are divided on the question, whether Ahriman would be destroyed by the purifying fire of judgment, or brought to sing the praises of Ahura with all his hosts.[2]

Both these solutions are maintained in the modern Pârsî church; and both seem to have been developed naturally enough out of the genius of the Zoroastrian faith. They certainly were not added to it through contact with the

[1] In the Hindu pantheistic view of evil, it was natural that the early symbols should gradually change their meanings, even passing into opposite ones. They floated in the haze of metamorphosis, where deity became all things in turn, and all things deity. Thus the serpent, originally the cloud-demon, slain by the god of lightning, became in India the coiled bed of the preserving God. But no symbol of evil became in Iran a type of good; the moral emphasis was too strong. So the conflict of the gods unknown to the Veda is a great feature of the eschatology of the Avesta, especially the *Bundehesh*, as also of the *Edda*.

[2] See *Bundehesh*, chap. xxxi., translated in Schwenck, *Mythologie der Perses*, 324–25.

religions of Media and Babylonia.[1] The old Accadian writings contain no working out of the problem of evil either by annihilation or conversion. The strife was against cosmical demons out of the abyss, who disturbed the order of the world, and brought disease, calamity, death, and unnatural or insane conduct upon men:[2] and these were to be repelled by conjuration and spell; but their relation to the moral being was external, and the need was, not of their extirpation, but their defeat. The ethical interest of the Iranian offset his horror of physical death by the heaven prepared beyond it for the good, but the Accadian sent both good and evil to a *sheôl* of "darkness, where there is no food but dust;" and though there were seven (astronomical) zones in this unblest land of shadows, these had no bearing on the final solution of the war of evil against good. To a faith so entirely absorbed in the present life as the Accadian, a resurrection of the dead to judgment, and a consequent purification of the spiritual universe, could have no meaning. The epic of Izdubar contains only one hint looking this way, — a fountain of life in the depths of the world of shades, described as affording power to Ishtar to return from these gloomy realms to the light of day.

Neither in a spiritual nor ethical point of view does the Accadian religion, nor any of its combinations, compare with the Zoroastrian. Good and evil are not distinctly separated, and are often represented by the same deity.[3] The Assyrio-Babylonians merely inherited Accadian gods, and the Semitic element brought by Assyria added nothing to the development of these questions. Asshur and Bel and Nebo and Merodach exercised no such function in

[1] The passages in Anquetil's translations from the *Yaçna* which teach this doctrine are mistranslated. They are quoted in Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 302.

[2] See Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. ed, pp. 29, 30.

[3] See Schrader: *Höllenf. der Istar; and Records of The Past*, vol. i. p. 139; and in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Augsburg, June 19, 1872. Also Lenormant, p. 165–66.

regard to evil as Ahuramazda; represented no moral conflict, nor looked to any final dealing with the woes and sins of the world. Sensual excess, which Ahura put far from him, was in fact involved in the Semitic conception of deity itself; and Baal, Moloch, Jahveh, as gods of fire, were worshipped by rites, even of human sacrifice, which would have been incongruous with the spiritual meaning of that element in the Iranian faith, and made it unfit to serve as a purification of the world from sin. So that neither Accadian nor Semitic beliefs could have suggested a final disposal of evil through purifying fire, which should destroy the wicked seeds or convert their malignant will. On the other hand, this eschatology was a natural development of Zoroastrian beliefs, even as presented in the Gâthâs. And to their historical influence must be ascribed its prominence, not only in the Bundehesh of the Sassanian epoch, but in Hebrew literature subsequent to the exile; as in the Book of Daniel, the apocalyptic Enoch and Ezra, and in the early Christian belief concerning the future life, the end of the world, and the last judgment.[1] Eternity of punishment belongs to a very different class of ideas, since it is as far as possible from recognizing the final purification of the universe from evil, or the final supremacy of good, although of course intended to do this in some degree. It is therefore thoroughly anti-Iranian, and its promulgation in Christianity and later Judaism must be ascribed to the peculiar intensity of those personal feelings in which the great moral reaction of Christianity originated, and especially to the Messianic apocalyptics of the two centuries preceding the birth of Jesus, — prominently, the Book of Daniel.[2]

[1] The doctrine of the resurrection of the body was penetrating Palestine in the time of Christ, and that of the immortality of the soul, derived from Platonism, spreading in Alexandria. But these two excluded each other. Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 316.

[2] See, for Hebrew ideas of hell-punishment, *Sirach*, vii. 17; of immortality in post-exilian period, *Wisdom of Solomon*, ii. 23; Josephus, B. J. ii. 8, 11: of resurrection, Ecclesiastes

But the whole tenor of the Avesta implies, — and this is the grand thing about it, — the victory of good over evil, of right over wrong, the sovereignty of the law proclaimed in the conscience. As Ahuramazda was first, so He shall be last. Man, his creation, born radiant, with eyes looking upward, shall soar above his evil stars; and this, not by the destruction of his personal will, but by the natural and noble exercise of it. The Bundehesh says that "with consciousness and the Fravashi [ideal soul] Ahura brought love and wisdom unto men." "Which will ye choose, O ye souls of men, about to take earthly form, — to be made for warring against evil, that ye may afterwards become immortal, or to be protected against evil from the beginning?" "And by their wisdom they choose to be made as creatures, to strive for immortal life."[1] This worshipper of light could see all things resolving themselves into light at last. In the Gâthâs, his living trust in being on the side of Ahura, the just and pure one, is his all-sufficing confidence, while the fate of the evil is simply to be conquered at last. In the later Yaçnas, Vendidâd, Yashts, and the Bundehesh, there gradually grew up a historic or rather prophetic construction of the process by which the end should be reached. The world-history is divided into four periods of three thousand years each, — during the first two of which Ahura creates freely his good world; during the third the strife begins and deepens; and during the fourth, opening with Zoroaster, three prophets appear at intervals of a thousand years, the last of whom, Sosyosh, brings the resurrection of bodies, judgment of souls, and destruction of evil, — according to the Bundehesh, by puri-

xlvi. 12; xlix. 10; II Maccabees, vii., xii. 44: of last judgment, Rabbins: of resurrection of body, Rabbins. Duschak: *Die biblisch-talmud. Glaubenslehre*, etc., pp. 181, 182. The extreme resemblance of Persian eschatology with that of Daniel is traced in Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 303. Resurrection, with Daniel and Maccabees, is partial only, however. See also Duschak: *Die biblisch-talmud. Glaubenslehre*, etc., p. 175.

[1] *Bundehesh*, ii.; Justi.

fication of all good and evil, through fire, into capacity for blessedness. For this end the corporeal world is brought into being, that the good principle might, by mastering the intervening space between his own realm and the opposing one, absorb the latter, and make the universe one in himself.[1]

Lenormant[2] thinks it was "from rejecting the notion of original sin, and substituting the doctrine of emanation for that of creation, and fatalism for freedom, that most of the peoples of pagan [Aryan] antiquity were led to the melancholy theory of the Four Ages, as we find it in the sacred books of India and the poems of Hesiod;" whereas the Bible, regarding man as free and not subject to fate, does not contain the idea of world-decadence. But there seems to be as much practical fatalism in the Hebrew conception of a tendency to sin in human nature — capable of causing man first to be expelled from Paradise, then to be almost extirpated by a deluge, and through all ages to be scourged by a divine wrath, from which even the chosen people are not free, and from which only a divine Messiah could deliver him — as in that pantheistic evolutionism of the Aryan, which if resulting in a more definite idea of a cycle of degeneracy, yet involved also the further consequence of a renewal of good beyond the destruction of an evil world. Surely, the God who creates man after His own pleasure is as truly a power of fate as the law that makes his history a decadence, and its end a dissolution of the evil it has caused. In fact the Hebrews, as well as the Hindus and Persians and Greeks, were led to the "melancholy" theory of world-destruction, — certainly not less melancholy because it was to be the consequence

[1] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. 142. The Hebrews did not reach this till very late; and Paul's description of the triumph of Christianity at the last judgment, resolving all evil into obedience to God, is a carrying out of it (1 Cor. xv. 24). The doctrine of final restitution of the world gradually penetrated Jewish beliefs, and the later Cabalistic writings resemble in this the Zoroastrian. Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 306.

[2] *Contemporary Review* for September, 1879.

of original sin, than if it had been the sequel of gold, silver, brass, and iron periods. In fact, the Hebrews believed in such penal destruction, and transmitted the idea to Christianity, which made it a fundamental motive. As for freedom, no race ever abased itself before a personal God more than the older Hebrews; who believed that their jealous Jahveh punished curiosity by expulsion from Eden, and aspiration to social progress with confusion of tongues. They were more oppressed by that sense of separation from God which came from the emphasis laid on their freedom to sin, than the Aryan was by the sense of an emanation, even by fatality, which did not break the unity of Being. Semite, as well as Aryan, had his myth of a Golden Age and of man's fall from it, thus confessing the power of historic decadence and that element of fate which cannot be ignored. And of these the Aryan has been the prophet of progress: this was the meaning of destiny for him, and his doctrine of lost things; and his evolution is the philosophy of hope. The Persian was the very apostle of earnest ethical endeavor. He also had his myth of "original sin," of a Fall (of Yima, king of Paradise) through a lie; and Lenormant himself finds in the serpent created by Ahriman to poison his Eden and effect his ruin an echo of the same tradition on which the Bible story rests. This writer, even while making use of these resemblances to aggrandize Bible authority, is candid enough to confess that the Zoroastrian scriptures gave moral value to the older Chaldeo-Semitic conceptions of the Fall.[1]

Now, we have said that this religion does not deal in the metaphysics of evil; it dwells simply on the practical antagonism of right and wrong, and of the things which make for the one and for the other. It was not introversive enough to find the root of evil, as later systems have, in human nature. It was too much absorbed, as it seems

[1] *Contemporary Review*, September, 1879.

to me, in the hatred of it to ascribe it to the perfect God. It did not undertake to justify its existence under a wise Providence, as discipline, or culture. It does not anywhere say positively, "This struggle shall develop moral strength and spiritual growth." But did it not practically affirm this? Do men make it the life of their religion to war against wrong, without discovering that this resistance is after all to draw out and educate their wills by the pursuit of the ideal?

There is no failure here to recognize the strength of the foe; the cup of evil is drunk to the dregs. The tragedy of sin and penalty, the martyrdom of heroism and love, the stern conditions of victory, the inexorable mathematics of moral and spiritual cost, are acknowledged in the whole structure of the religion, in every detail of the epos and dogma of this mighty strife for the possession of the soul of man. Never does the power of Ahriman fail to prove itself in the bodily life of the righteous. Never does the weakness of Ahriman fail to be made manifest in the moral gain and growth for the whole creation, that follow on his terrible but impotent revenge. The myth is at pains to foreshow this issue by infusing into his whole conduct of the strife an element of folly and fear. Through this earlier "holy war" there runs the Iranian instinct to overpoise the past with the future, experience with prophecy; to make failure and loss the stepping stones to progress. Darmesteter, who with marvellous ingenuity has traced the whole Avestan mythology as a process of evolution from the strife of the elements, has hinted this higher spiritual meaning in a striking summary, which deserves to be quoted: —

"Thirty years Ahriman is powerless against the Bull;[1] three thousand years he trembles before Gayômarḍ;[2] thirty years he gnaws

[1] The Bull is Ahura's good creation, slain by Ahriman, from whose seed spring fertility and the human race.

[2] The first man, slain by Ahriman.

the bit under the spur of Tahmurath;[1] but at last all these perish. The stone and word of Zoroaster plunge him into hell; but Zoroaster himself must perish. According to the legend preserved by Clementine Homily, he is struck by the demon with lightning; according to Firdûsî, he is slain by the Turanians in the sack of Balkh. According as the imagination conceives the thunder-storm in view of the light which preceded, or that which follows it, the god of light dies or is victorious. But the dead god is succeeded by another; the slain is avenged by some relative, son, or brother in the myth. And the final victory is won by all the early heroes returning again; or by a descendant of Zoroaster, Çaoshyañç."[2]

The impressive fact about this Iranian myth is that it affiliates each martyr of Ahura's gospel both to his successor and to his predecessor; so that the sacred seed proves itself immortal, and death is constantly swallowed up in necessary victory. Gayômard comes from the seed of the Bull; from Gayômard comes the line of heroes who fight the dragon, or slay the demons, or hold the Devil himself in curb; from their line comes the prophet with his word of doom, before which Ahriman trembles; and when, spite of all the saints, heroes, and martyrs, the earth falls under the dominion of evil,[3] and the rotten body of humanity dissolves, it is but to reveal the reserved health and salvation in the omnipotent virtue of their return in one high host to judgment, not one gift or glory lost, the seed of Zoroaster at their head, and the souls of all just men, the better souls of all men, to evolve and people a purified world. The nature of this affiliation will appear from an outline of the myth in its relation to ideal progress.

Yima, most blessed of men, ruler and maker of the earthly paradise, began to love lying speech, and fell.

[1] Mythic king of men, who chains Ahriman, and rides him as a horse over the earth; but tempted by his wife to fear, is devoured by the great enemy.

[2] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 211.

[3] The terrible accounts of the depravity and misery of the world before the coming of the last redeemers is believed by Darmesteter to be drawn in a large degree by the Bundehesh writers from the Mongol and Arabian wars.

Three times did his "majesty," or bliss, take the wings of a bird and fly away. Thrice was it seized and brought back. The first who brought back the bliss of Paradise was Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, all-hearing, all-beholding, truth-protecting Sun. (For he dispels the dark.) The second was Thraêtona,[1] born in farthest bounds of space,[2] whence come the rude blasts of the storm-cloud. He delivered from these, and from the sicknesses, pains, and wants that proceed from them. He wars with the great serpent of the cloud (*Azhi-dahâka*, the Vṛitra of the Vedas), and is called the victorious. The third was Kereçâçpa, who delivered from the wild beasts, the robber, and the armed wilderness-foe; and he is called the Strong One. He is son of Thrita, whom the Vendidâd calls the first of physicians, holder-back of sickness and death.[3] But Yima's bliss was physical merely. These saviours saved only the man of the senses. Yima could not meditate on the law, nor bear it to men.[4] His paradise was the reign of innocence and physical comfort: no cold nor heat, no disease nor death, till falsehood entered; and with that the poison of Ahriman smote the natural order, which three physical forces did what they could to restore. But they were insufficient. So in fulness of time came Zoroaster, the greater deliverer through the law that commands purity of thought, word, and deed, — the law that forces evil powers back into invisible ways, and annihilates them in their spiritual being. The Haoma-Yasht ascribes all these saving forces to the devotion of men through sacrifice of the holy plant; the Çrosh-Yasht, to Çraosha, the incarnation of the law (his body the Măthra),[5] who is associated with completing the forms of religious service, as well as with glorious works of protection and punishment, carry-

[1] Corresponds in main with Vedic *Trita* (Indra's helper).

[2] Varena, Vedic Varuṇa. See careful analysis of the myth, as found in *Zamyâd-Yasht*, by Westergaard (*Ind. Studien*, iii. 402–440). This Yasht was unknown to Anquetil.

[3] *Vendidâd*, xx. [4] *Vendidâd*, ii. 10. [5] *Yaçna*, lvi.

ing on the victorious strife of Zoroaster. No words can express the absolute trust of the worshipper in this all-mastering upholder and regenerator of the physical order, through the spirit of Ahura, arising from his dwelling on the holy mountain, that shines inwardly with its own light, and combining in himself the corporeal and spiritual worlds.[1]

And in the latter day, through fierce wars and portents, the spiritual, prophetic seed of Zoroaster bears other saviours (*Çaoshyañtô*, profitable ones); [2] and the shut doors of Yima's paradise are reopened, and men and beasts come forth to people the earth swept by the latter deluge of penal rain, till Çaoshyañç, "the Helper," last and greatest, brings a new book of the law, and proclaims the long battle won, and the dead are raised to judgment, and all evil thought and deed are at an end. And all through the conflict, upheld by human prayer and praise, and upholding every good aim with inconceivable reserves of power and love, hover the innumerable Fravashis,[3] the ideal souls of all living beings, from Ahura to his humblest servant and his least work, — the onward pressure of the multitudinous universe itself, gathered up into one living aspiration to the Best.

Notice here, first, the progress from material to spiritual deliverance, — destruction of outward monsters and physical woes; then deliverance from all rebellion and hatred against the good spirit, through the might of holy prophets and the supreme virtue of the holy law. Each step leads upward to the next, and the resources of the spirit are ever adequate to the need.[4] Notice next, that the earlier deliv-

[1] *Yaçna*, lvi. 9, 10; lvii. 9, 10; Haug.

[2] *Yaçna*, xxxiv. 13; xliv. 11; xlv. 3. Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. 153.

[3] *Fravardîn-Yasht.*

[4] The myth of the storm-cloud, the battle of light with the elements, has risen to the spiritual warfare of the prophet's word with the powers of falsehood, at the same time that the actors ceasing to be gods of the atmosphere, are the sons of men.

erers, including Yima, belong also to the mythology of the Vedas; but whereas in the Vedas they are immortal gods, in the Avesta all, except Mithra, are mortal men. In other words, the war which Vedic mythology placed in the superhuman world is brought by the Iranian down to the solid ground of human life. It is man, however endowed and exalted in his powers, still man, that works out deliverance for himself. Thus the Yama of the Vedas is god of the future world. Yima of the Iranians is man blessed in the present world. The destroyers of monsters in the Vedas are solar powers personified as deities, and their work stops with releasing the refreshing showers from storm-clouds that hold them back among the mountains. Thraêtona and Kereçâçpa in the Avesta, and Yima also, become saviours as men through the piety of their fathers;[1] and their work is ethical, restoring a world poisoned by human falsehood, and preparing the way for a spiritual law. The material and mythologic names, originally common to both races, have been wrought up into two differing forms of religious power; one of them putting man quite out of sight, the other exalting him by works worthy of a god. Religion has here become personal; its centre is the will; its energy, nerve-power; its work, practical deliverance from outward evils and inward sins by a strife that ends but in their destruction. Notice last, that through all the dualism in which evil gets such tremendous recognition, there runs the optimism of faith, that the world belongs to righteousness, and all things shall work to make good its claim. Or, to put it religiously, God will surely be ready with help at need, and appear, to save His world. Put these successive saviours of the Avestan faith beside that grand word of the Hindu Kṛishṇa (speaking for Vishṇu, the all-preserving), "Whensoever virtue is enfeebled, or vice and injustice prevail, then do I become

[1] *Yaçna*, ix.

manifest, from age to age revealed to reassure the faltering steps of right;"[1] or beside the Johannic doctrine of the "Word made flesh," to fulfil what the prophets and Moses lacked. It is older than either of these.

Zoroastrianism illustrates the law, that religion ever seeks to make good superior to evil, and in some form or other, logical or otherwise, insists on its ultimate triumph. Religion is man's endeavor to assure himself of this very thing; it is the promise of his ideal to countervail the ills of life and the sense of sin. But religious assurance is in general more positive in its assertion of progress and ultimate redemption for society as a whole, through its appointed means, than in affirming the best issues for the individual. And just as Christianity contemplates vast numbers of the human race as destined to become devils in eternal pain, so the Avesta makes the wicked turn into Daevas, or spirits of evil;[2] and one gate of this terrible dualism leads to a populous hell. Even in such dismal failures to reconcile man with the conditions of life, we must acknowledge that religion aims at justice, that its retributions are imperfect efforts for righteous ethical sequence. On the Avestan bridge of judgment, the balance hangs poised for all: the judges are Mithra, the truth; Rashnu, eternal righteousness; and Çraosha, perfect obedience; and the questioning of the soul by itself is the last appeal. As in Christianity, the strict arithmetic of penalty is, clumsily enough, broken through by a gleam of at least more kindly spiritual economy, which applies supererogatory merits of saints to the cancelling of other men's sins; so, if the theory of Spiegel is correct, the virtues of good Zoroastrians are believed to be laid up in a treasury of succor (*Miçvâna*), to turn the scale, at the last judgment, in behalf of those whose own repentance has not quite outweighed their misdeeds.[3] If,

[1] *Bhagavad-gita*, iv. 6.

[2] *Vendidâd*, viii. 100.

[3] But this view is not confirmed by other writers. See, on one side, Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* ii. 17; on the other, Harlez, i. 265 *n*; Haug, *Essays*, etc., p. 389; or *Vendidâd*, xix. 122.

however, this Miçvâna, or middle world, is rather the intermediate space between heaven and hell, where those souls are held whose good and evil are equal, it would be at all events an attempt to approximate exact justice, instead of admitting mercy.

No more than any other religion of the past which bases the future destiny of the soul upon the analogy of personal relations in this world, as shown in private emotions, or in the courts of justice between man and man, does the religion of Zoroaster reach the assurance which reconciles our actual ignorance of the future with an ideal trust in the laws of our being, the unknown as well as the known. But the statement of its limits is also that of its characteristic power and function in human history. First of great religions, it revealed the power of the personal element in the religious ideal; evolving out of man's crude sense of the strife of material nature a conception of spiritual struggle and moral prophecy through the energy of individual will, and incarnating this conception in a personal Word, around whom the great conflict of good and evil gathered so supremely that all coming faiths were destined to draw from the fountains it opened in mankind.

And not only did this affirmation of the dignity of the will assure the triumph of what the willer believed to be best, but saved him from the demoralizing effects of pure Dualism, which would have admitted no solution of the strife. A noble aspiration to unity shaped the whole system, proceeding from the necessity of the ideal will to secure an undivided ground of action, complete concentration of aim, free and simple self-development. Thus we find in the Avesta each class of objects traced to one beginning, — all waters to one source; all trees to one tree; all animals to the primal Bull; all men to one progenitor (*Gayômarḍ*). Hence, castes are impossible: the king is

parent of all men; the marriage rule is monogamy; the ethical law is responsibility to one personal principle of right.

ZRVAN-AKARANA.

ALL worship of personal Will involves Dualism, in some form, however incomplete. The power of choosing between opposites is indispensable to the freedom of will; and so long as pure will, as such, is held to be the supreme essence, the law which it is its only real freedom to obey is subordinated to its right of choice,—that is, to caprice; and the worship of will becomes the worship of miracle. This is the inevitable logic of all religions of this kind. But all religions have germs of growth out of this vicious circle. Even in Mazdeism, the typical religion of personal Will, there were intimations of this need of somewhat greater than such will; and these intimations associated themselves with its movement out of Dualism, prompting it to solve the antagonism of Ormuzd and Ahriman in a common source. This is the significance of the Zervanitic doctrine in later Mazdeism.[1] It was one of a series of cosmogonic efforts, deriving the world from elements of universal order, such as Light, Space, Time, Fate: and a direct result of the most important of these conceptions,—namely, that of Fate.[2]

Every thoughtful person must recognize universal law as master of all individual intentions or aims. The mind which has not learned that the world is governed by forces to which all wills of whatever power must conform, has had but slight experience of life. The noblest hope and desire are most closely confronted by insuperable limits. Before these primal conditions of existence, these inscrutable realities of law,—call it either cosmical or spiritual,—

[1] Spiegel's *Avesta*, ii. 218, note iii. xxxix.

[2] The Pârsîs of the present time are not dualists; the old meaning of the *Avesta* is lost for them.

all gods must bend. Their order upholds all self-conscious being like a sea. This is the impersonal soul, the inconceivable essence, which comes to us as divine necessity, and which we must learn to hold benignant and dear forever. All great personal religions have hints and gleams of this light beyond their own, this supremacy over the objects of their worship, even when they strive to regard the two as one; because men cannot help feeling such predominance of substance over will in their own lives. The greatest of religions, the universal religion, will be characterized by enthroning it, trustingly and deliberately, above all conceptions of Divine Purpose or Will. I seek instinctive germs of this truth in every positive religion. I think I can discern how such an instinct helped Mazdeism resolve its Dualism into something like unity.

The sway of Destiny over all motion, spiritual and physical, was expressed by the Hindus in the term *Bhaga*, meaning the "allotter or giver." The word *Bakht*, from the same root, is used in the older Avesta in the general sense of celestial appointment, without reference to any personal source.[1] But in the later writings this idea became more distinctly associated with the movement of the stars and planets, and with the strife in which they were supposed to be engaged.[2] From these movements destiny was supposed to proceed, and in a more strict and positive sense than in the ordinary and wide-spread faith in astrological influences. Thus it appears that in the worshipper of free-will and choice, the movements of the heavenly bodies, even conceived as strife, were capable of awakening a reverent sense of supreme order, irreversible law, and predetermined result.[3]

[1] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 319–20. Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 273.

[2] *Minôkhired*, viii. 17.

[3] Both the Chinese and the European languages use the word "heaven" to express the sense of all-controlling destiny, where a personal term seems to be less in accordance with the impression of order and law.

Now, it is easy to see how this divine and resistless march of the heavenly powers came to be identified with the flow of Time, of Boundless Time,[1] — its obvious condition, and its most impressive suggestion. The Greek made Cronos the oldest of gods; and it is, in a sense, our necessity to conceive of time as the all-determining, all-resolving power of Fate. Whatsoever is past recall, whatsoever must be but is not yet, the certainties of past and future alike, are offspring of Time, whereof none saw the beginning, none can foresee the end. Time is the Hindu Kâlî, with the worlds strung about her neck like skulls of the dead. Time is the all-engulfing god of the Bhagavad-gitâ, down whose open mouth rush the generations. Time is the one sure movement, the one inevitable path. The heavenly legions on their ordered march through boundless time and space, — those undying fires man fails to reach, yet never fails to behold; those gods of all ages, obedient to a mysterious Order beyond themselves, — might well seem to bind past, present, and future into one all-determining Fate. But if time was the ground of these celestial movements for the Mazdean, not less would it be the parent and sure promise of all the spiritual and material glories which he expected from the triumph of his law. Even in the Vendidâd it is here and there invoked, together with the Word and the self-sustaining heavens, equally with the gods themselves.[2] And the Mînôkhired, at the end, sums up the accomplishment of destined good through the toils and sufferings of the past.[3]

[1] *Mînôkhired*, xxvii. 10; viii. 17. "The things of the world are moved by Destiny, and the regular course of that which is self-created — Time, the ruler of the long ages." As it is appointed to each in every time, so it is accomplished, "so that the good which should come through those who have departed, to the creatures of Ahura, has been brought to pass."

[2] *Vendidâd*, xix. 55. For later development of Zrvan-akarana, see Carré: *L'Ancien Orient.*, ii. 379.

[3] It is scarcely necessary to say that by this term I but mean that imperfect form of dualism which has been already allowed as belonging to Avestan religion.

Mazdean Dualism, then, contained in itself the germs of this principle of reconciliation. No resort could have been more natural. Whatever modifications it may have received from Babylonian sources, this sovereignty of Time without bounds was the demand of personal will for a ground of confidence beyond the strife of its own free choice, or any idealization of the same. That it came through the sense of all-mastering movement in those heavenly fires which had always been the symbol of deity, simply shows that Nature inevitably brings the recognition of unity in the religious conceptions. But it was easier to escape the bonds of Dualism than the incapacity of worshipping any other than some form of personal will. And Zrvan-akarana, though a resort to an impersonal element, became no less personal than Ormuzd, and no less the centre of anthropomorphic mythology. Still the Bundehesh, as late at least as the Sassanian times, does not represent Zrvan as a person. Its first chapter either describes Ahura as "possessing endless time,"[1] or else the "Time of Ahura" as that which "was, and is, and is to be."[2] And Ahriman is said to exist for a time which shall have its end. There is no cosmogonic expression here, no hint of the origin of either from a pre-existent God.

About the same period, however, Theodore of Mopsuestia wrote that Zoroaster made *Zarouam*, ruler of the whole universe, and called him *Destiny;* and that this first god produced both Ormuzd and Ahriman (or Satan). This was the general belief of the Armenian Christian writers of that period, and shows that it was largely under the influence of Syrian Christianity that the change of Zrvan from an abstract to a personal form must have taken place. In the later Persian sects, formed under Semitic

[1] Mit unbegränzter Zeit begabt. Windischmann.
[2] Die Zeit des Ahuramazda war, und ist, und wird sein. Justi.

and Christian relations, the Zervanites, or believers in Time as a supreme god, were especially noticed by the Mussulman writers.[1] But the struggle of good and evil is not to be ended by the triumph of one Will, one Person, one Lord, whatever his name, over other beings equal or inferior. For no service of a person can make free or holy; only the service of righteous principles, — of truth as truth, and good as good, not as the will of God or man. Zoroastrianism, — and, we must add, Christianity, — for want of this final step upon impersonal foundations, have been fated, with all their modifications, to revolve in the same circle of ethical weakness and limited sight. Thus the new Mazdean god, though a resort to natural order, was but an imperfect and transient *foregleam* of what only ages of science following on ages of this anthropomorphic worship could bring. Nevertheless, as such resort, it was one of those landmarks in history that indicate the path of spiritual evolution. And it is such landmarks, discernible to the careful student of comparative religion, that makes religious history of most value to us to-day.

Zrvan gradually becomes indentified with other deities of similar name, but different meaning, and of Semitic or Median origin; and a mixed mythology of shreds and patches gathers about the old reconciling Time-idea, till it becomes as finite as the gods it was said to have created. Ormuzd and Ahriman reappear dressed in the patriarchal robes of Esau and Jacob; and the old Zrvan, tricked by the younger and evil-minded son, retains so little of his Time-mastery as to be obliged to grant him nine thousand years of rule in the world. Hindu legends of creation of the world through sacrificial suicide of a god, are infused among Mazdean traditions utterly opposed to their ascetic and mystical spirit. But through all changes and all syncretism of systems abides the old faith that good shall be

[1] See Haug's *Essays*, etc., p. 15.

triumphant at last; and that assurance, which in the beginning helped Avestan Dualism from practical failure to reconcile man with the conditions of life, maintains the like function in the latest phases of Mazdeism. It inspires the worship of Zrvan as well as that of Ahura. And therefore it is not, in either of these phases, a mere trust in personal will, but rests, in part at least, on confidence in the natural tendency of things; on the necessities of the world and of man. Nor can I hesitate to accept, as at least in accordance with the laws of evolution, the striking summary of religious systems by a distinguished Oriental scholar, which represents "all their first principles,—Time, Fate, Light, Space, as forms of One,—namely, Heaven, or the Sky, considered in its movement, or its brightness, or its extent. Ormuzd begins by being the luminous infinite Heaven. And the same principle has given the Indo-European family their Supreme God."[1]

A still broader generalization may be based upon that one of these principles with which our Iranian studies have thus far been most concerned. If we remember that through all the strife of good and evil which man has felt within him and beheld without, his imagination has remained loyal to that transcendent symbol the Light, in which his conscious religious life found its first inspiration, we shall assuredly be convinced that the worship of Nature is not only the natural, but the sane and sacred track of humanity.

On this track lies the real solution of Dualism, which Zoroastrianism and all the other religions of the past, with all their compensations and foregleams, have failed to accomplish. That "the fall of the race through the bad use that its earliest progenitors made of their free-will is the only solution of the formidable problem" of evil,[2] is

[1] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 336–37.

[2] Lenormant: *Contemporary Review*, September, 1879.

a mere Biblico-historical dogma, which does not touch the root of the matter, but simply puts it back in time, and involves it in deeper complications. If evil be what the Bible represents it, no such misuse of free-will by the first men, or the last men, can account for it. It has been said, and there is truth in the statement, that the Hebrew escaped the association of darkness with evil. His form of dualism was absorbed in the conception of a God above both light and darkness, of whom they were the products: "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." But this noble plane of Hebrew prophecy, higher than any point reached by Chaldean, Persian, or Phœnician, does not solve the problem of evil, — the deeper dualism which no special symbol exhausts. The will of a God alone is not sufficient to answer it. Nor can any revelation of such will serve better the demand of reason in our age. Evil, physical and moral, cannot be instituted by any personal will.

Dualism is in Nature, in man; good and evil, both in the physical and ethical spheres, cannot be ignored. Their conflict is the tremendous reality, which no religion can possibly put out of sight. It is the glory of Mazdeism to have struck root in this central fact: its failure, to have ended in solutions which solve nothing. For no triumph of one personal will over another, or of one kind of willing over another, no utter extermination of half the will-power of the universe, can explain or justify the tragic hate and strife. Only when it is recognized that, behind the conflict of good and evil wills whether human or divine, — the antagonism of purpose by which character is formed and virtue enthroned over sorrow and sin, — there is in the nature of things a law that evil is the condition of good; that without the lower the higher could not be; that liberty and progress, and love and duty, and heroism and devotion, imply the existence of evil, and ripen through its

tasks; and that this necessity, in the eternal nature of things, uses all personality to serve its own uncreated law of growth, — only when this religion of Nature shall supplant the religions which ultimate in man-made divinities of Will, which they themselves must take for granted, can the dark riddle of ages be solved.

II.

MORALITY OF THE AVESTA.

MORALITY OF THE AVESTA.

IT might seem that little could be said for the morality of a system which insists as earnestly on the criminality of killing an otter, or dropping one's nail-parings about the house, as on the slaying of a man. Very strange results came in process of time of that complete confusion of the physical and moral worlds inherent in Iranian dualism. We can readily see that it was only logical that all the evil purpose of Ahriman should appear to be incarnated in each of his creatures, and to call for its destruction as the highest duty; and that all the goodness of Ahuramazda should be embodied in each good and helpful product thereof, and demand its preservation with equal energy. We have already seen upon what trivial associations many creatures were proved pure or impure; yet there can be no doubt that the choice was in a measure determined by real gratitude and sympathetic respect on the part of these simple tribes, whose chief interests were the protection of their settlements and the security of the products of their industry. And why should not the watch-dog be made a centre of superstitious awe and jealous care by a people at that stage of progress, as the bread and wine of atonement by a more introversive religion?

"I have made the dog, O Zarathustra, with keen scent and sharp teeth, faithful to man, as a protection to the folds, — I, who am Ahuramazda. When he is sound and in good voice, no thief nor wolf can come nigh." "For the dwellings would not stand fast on the earth created by Ahuramazda, but for the dogs which pertain to the cattle and the village."[1]

[1] *Vendidâd*, xiii. 106, 111, 165.

By slaying a certain kind of dog, the offender — reckless of Ahura's good purpose, and sinning against his will — "slays his own soul, and the effects of the act last for nine generations."[1] He who kills a trained hound excites abhorrence; and at his death no other soul can deliver him, nor will the dogs help him at the bridge of judgment.[2] The penalty for giving hurtful food to a pup is fifty blows with the horse-goad, and fifty with the scourge (*çraoshô-charana*). Minute rules for expelling demons from different organs of the body, for purifying it from touch of the dead,[3] for removing menstrual uncleanness, for the disposal of exuviæ like the dead hair or nails, are parts of the great struggle to cleanse the living world from the decay and death which are Ahriman's instruments. They are neither better nor worse in themselves than other forms of ritual purification, which are in the physical world what processes for sanctification are in the spiritual. This equal insistence on things external and internal, this attachment of solemn sanctions to doings in themselves thoroughly trivial, illustrates a confusion of the physical and moral spheres common to all religions, and unavoidable in the absence of physical science, which finds itself confronted down to the latest moment by a similar class of superstitions, such as praying for the removal of drought or pestilence, and expecting Providential interference with physical laws. With the Iranian, in special degree, an intense propensity to symbolism gave everything in the physical world a corresponding meaning for the spiritual. This meaning was not so much consciously applied, as immediately actualized or enacted by direct will, — a nerve-force by which mind and body were in such close *rapport* that they might be called the poles of one substance. All the stock phrases of the Avesta, — "pure mind and body;" "purity of thought, word, and deed;" "the beautiful body of Ahuramazda;"

[1] *Vendidâd*, xiii. 7. [2] Ibid., xiii. 21–25. [3] Ibid., ix. 6.

"the soul of the Bull,"—indicate this closeness of relation of the physical and spiritual: each is seen *in* the other, not inferred *from* it. The world is known as ethics; the will, as acts, forms, things done. Physical acts, destroying evil or preserving good things, actually enlarge the world of good. This intense concreteness of ethical passion or fire, unrestrained by prudential wisdom or physical science, explains the vast outlays of energy on things acceptable to Ahura, —in parks, paradises, dogs, irrigation, culture of the land, destruction of idols and noxious creatures, rites and pomps. Mass had essential spiritual value in these things; every insect killed, told for so much penance or moral service. The "Acta Martyrum Persarum" says that to kill flies was a sign of conversion from Christ to Zoroaster! The blows with the scourge (*çraoshô-charana*), which were supposed to have been given to the back of the offender, were in fact given by him to the noxious creatures of Ahriman; and even penance was estimated in good works.[1]

This confusion of physical and moral, with its accompanying ritualism, does not forbid a marked degree of ethical earnestness in the Avesta. The Bible of free-will, it insists everywhere on free choice and life-long consecration to the moral war. Its root-idea is, that falsehood (infidelity to thought or faith) is radically destructive; that truth is practically creative and holy. Penalties for violation of promise or contract (*mithrô-druj*), affect not only the offender, but descend to his children.[2] In later times, tremendous self-imprecations were drawn up as guards against falsehood;[3] and we know from the Greeks what importance the Persians attached to truth. Light itself is truth. The promise must be kept, *even with an unbeliever.* The value of all outward acts was in purity of thought and upright will. The Gâthâ-ahunavaiti says: "They whose thoughts are not pure, from them the good

[1] Harlez, ii. 101. [2] *Mihr-Yasht*, 2. [3] *Avesta*, ii. lvii.; Spiegel.

spirit flees."[1] The Hâdôkht-Nask says: "The one recital of the Word which is worth all that exists, is that when the speaker forsakes evil thoughts, words, and deeds."[2] "Our own souls praise we, our own Fravashis praise we;" and "may you seek for what is better than the good."[3] This ideal ignores all differences of age, or time, or sex: "The Fravashis of all pure men and women in all regions praise we."[4] "We praise all the just men and women that are, have been, or shall be."[5] Then as for duties to others: Yima's paradise of world-innocence was where "no strife entered, nor vexation, nor enmity, nor deceit." The Vispered says: "Have ready feet, hands, wills, to do good works and avoid evil ones." "Do good, give help to the helpless."[6] The holiest verse (*Ahuna-vairya*), distilled substance of the Word, says: "The kingdom to Ahura, whose law protects the weak."[7] And this is the vow of the believer: "With purity and good-will, O Ahura, I will protect the poor who serves Thee."[8] He who does not pay a just debt "is a thief of the loan, a robber of what is lent to him."[9] In the later Mînôkhired, it is pronounced meritorious to build caravansaries.[10] And see the confidence in an "all-beholding, all-renewing, unsleeping Helper of the just and good:" "Mithra, grant that we may be well-wishing, of friendly mind, loved and honored, and may slay every evil desire,"—"Mithra, whom the lord of the region, the ruler of the clan, and the master of the household ever with uplifted hands call to aid; whom the poor man, devoted to the law but robbed of his goods, ever with uplifted hands calls to aid; the voice of whose weeping ascends to

[1] *Yaçna*, xxxiv. 8.

[2] "Righteousness is the only true purification." — *Vendidâd*, x. 38.

[3] *Yaçna*, lviii. 5, 8.

[4] *Fravardîn-Yasht*, 144.

[5] *Yaçna*, xli. 4, 5.

[6] *Vispered*, xviii. 1-5.

[7] Roth translates the Ahuna-vairya differently. "Ahura has placed in this world, as well as in the better, a shepherd for those who need." (*Zeitsch. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch* xxv. 20.) "Çraosha has built a firm abode for the poor." — *Yaçna*, lvi. 4.

[8] *Yaçna*, xxxiv. 5.

[9] *Vendidâd*, iv. 1, 2.

[10] *Avesta*, ii. lviii.

the stars and goes round the earth," — "Mithra, whose long arms grasp forward with strength; from far Indies to farthest West, and on the Northern stream, and at the ends of the world. The unrighteous thinks, 'Mithra sees not these evil deeds;' but I think in my soul no man on earth with hundredfold strength thinks, speaks, or does so much evil as Mithra with heavenly strength thinks, speaks, and does good."[1]

Çraosha smites the unchaste.[2] The Gâthâs admonish young married couples to "clothe each other with purity, after the righteous law, and bring great joy."[3] The Vendidâd shows its respect for pure relations between the sexes, when it makes the giving of one's sister or daughter as a pure virgin to a true believer an atonement for injuring a creature pure to Ahura, or believed to protect the husbandman's food.[4] Marriage with unbelievers is forbidden.[5] The married are of course honored beyond the unmarried; and while there are no signs of polygamy in the Avesta,— though Greek writers of a later date assert its existence,[6] to a limited extent, and also the Shâh-Nâmeh, — the later Pârsî writings define strictly the grounds that allow the husband to put aside his wife, and even permit him to take another to secure posterity, since increase of progeny adds strength to Ahura's hosts.[7] The poor, however, had but one wife. Marriage with near relatives was in high esteem, probably as keeping the clan-blood pure.[8] The marriage of even the nearest, — a result of the primitive veneration for ties of blood, — was, according to the Bundehesh,[9] one of the three inviolable things with which Ahriman could not intermingle, the custom being derived

1 *Mihr-Yasht*, 34, 84, 85, 105, 106.

2 *Yaçna*, lvi. 7.

3 *Yaçna*, lii. 5.

4 *Vendidâd*, xiv. 64–66; xiii. 169.

5 *Vendidâd*, xviii. 123, 124.

6 Herodotus says that the Persians of his day have many wives and concubines; and Strabo adds, for the purpose of gaining children.

7 *Avesta*, ii. xxxi.; Spiegel.

8 *Vispered*, iii. 18; Herod., iii. 88

9 *Bundehesh*, xxxv.

from the Persians of the older time.[1] We do not hesitate to set this down as proof, in that age of the world, that the awe of religion centred in the family, and made all that bound its members, for present and future time, in closest union supremely sacred. The Vendidâd has laws against infanticide, holding man, woman, and child alike guilty; also commanding that the father of an illegitimate child shall maintain it.[2] We find no definition either of marital powers (except the general command to the wife to obey the husband) or of parental rights. The Vispered calls "the mistress of the house" to the sacrifice, "the woman of pure thoughts, words, acts, irreproachable, and submissive to her spiritual teacher."[3]

All virtues centre in the duty of spreading the good Mazdayaçnian law of purity (*Asha*),[4] — the profit of the world. No sin like the violation of that law; no terms of friendship with the unbeliever in it.[5] Mazdean morality is indeed often brought into contradiction with natural humanity, like that of other religions, by its dependence on the interests of the faith. Thus physicians, where they are uncertain about remedies, are to experiment first, not on Mazdeans, but on unbelievers. Nevertheless, not even with these shall the true believer *deal falsely*.[6] The sacredness of the elements made the acts of all other faiths intolerable in many ways. Yet the Persian kings for the most part were tolerant. The Iranians believed themselves a chosen people, sent to redeem the world; and this, as with the Hebrews, was but the natural climax of a vehement self-assertion of the personal will. Ahriman's temptation of Zoroaster consisted in the attempt to induce him

[1] Deog. Laert. and Strabo.
[2] *Vendidâd*, xv.
[3] *Vispered*, iii. 20.
[4] *Vispered*, viii. 11.
[5] The unbelievers, teachers of evil doctrine (Karapans and Kavis), are said (*Yaçna*, xxxii.) to destroy the holy words and the spirit of life; to spoil Ahura's good intent, and help the wicked who make desolate the fields, and destroy the cattle. It does not seem easy to identify these enemies, who certainly could not have been Aryans. Harlez.
[6] *Mihr-Yasht*, i.

to curse the good Mazdayaçnian law, and was defeated by his reciting the sacred formula,[1] the Ahuna-vairya. The Haomas, Bereçmas, and the various priestly names and services by which the ritual was conducted, and in which the virtue of the law was carried, were called the "victorious remedies;"[2] and these organized forms of propagandism came more and more to absorb into themselves the meaning of "purity." The priests, who are hardly emphasized in the oldest Gâthâs, gradually became conspicuous, and priestly purity is celebrated in hymns and prayers. They seem to have had no power except that of performing rites, and of receiving a portion of the offering; and the "pure man," as such, appears competent to religious functions in the Zoroastrian system. He is in fact pure by virtue of rightly fulfilling the religious order. The later, more strictly organized priesthood were probably of Median origin. No offering of blood to Ahura or his powers; creatures were cut in pieces, all but a part of the caul, to be carried away by the worshippers and eaten: the gods did not want the body, but the soul (the dead being impure). So says Strabo;[3] and this is in accordance with the Avesta. Nothing here justifies the holocaust of Persian kings, which could only have been for food; nor the burial of living men, which was in honor of deities under the earth (*Chthonioi*), — such as are recorded of Queen Amestris and others.

The service was a prayer and hymn; Haoma juice poured out; bread and fruits, use of the "holy cup." Prayers were offered for others; for the dead, for the pure, for the creatures of Ahura. So the Persians, we are told, prayed for all Persians.

Practical religious earnestness, and the wide sweep of Ahura's purpose over all exclusive ambitions, in personal discipline or positive labor, made caste impossible. The

[1] *Vendidâd*, xix. [2] *Vispered*, viii. [3] Strabo, xv.

Gâthâs divide the Iranians into four classes, — priests, warriors, agriculturists, and artisans;[1] and these, by exercise of the duty of "the pure man," equally bring forth the Holy Word of right thought, word, and deed.[2] Caste was never established, in any proper sense, in Iran. The clan was developed to contain chiefs of the house, village, tribe, province, and "Zarathustra as the fifth" in some regions; as the fourth in others.[3] What is Zoroaster here? High priest? It may be. But there is no mistaking in the Avesta the aristocratic tone which inheres in the worship of will, even in the organization of the early Iranians; as we see in the Vispered, where is given the ritual of the Gahanbâr feasts, in honor of the six days of creation, or six seasons, six yearly feasts described in the Bundehesh. It opens with an invitation to lords and chiefs of all kinds, typical heads of creatures, qualities, forms, every one of which is thus represented in the great dualistic war. These typical chiefs are called the "givers" of the classes in question; and so there are hierarchical orders of priests, just as Ahura has his subordinates, and these their own, in celestial descending series. In the (later) Khordaḍ-Yasht, Zoroaster is forbidden to teach the law to any other than the priestly family (so the sentence is interpreted); but this could not have been done in the time of the Gâthâs. A striking illustration of the formulizing spirit, and its work upon the accumulated material of later ethics and ritualism, is found in the Patets, or confessional formulas, which contain anxiously minute enumerations of every conceivable short-coming, and prayers for forgiveness of every sin that could be thought of, as if everything depended on specifying every iota of desire or conscience in the liturgy, all of which indicates a long period of real ethical

[1] *Yaçna*, xix. 17; Haug.

[2] Haug's translation, making appointment of a spiritual guide one of these duties, is certainly doubtful.

[3] *Yaçna*, xix. 18.

earnestness before it could have come to this. The serious business of self-discipline seems to have haunted the Iranians of the Avesta; and the very fables of the race, it has been observed, "are free from the wild excesses of imagination, and have a severe and moral aspect."[1]

It is impossible to deny the moral earnestness of a faith whose ceremonial invocations enumerate hosts of good men. The preservation of their names alone, in this form, is the surest evidence of long ages of pious gratitude and honor to the best.[2] That hero-worship, which we have affirmed to be at the root of Iranian mind, has here its perfect illustration. The "Fravashis of the pure" are the earliest type of a religion of humanity, foreshadowing the modern cultus of genius and character. Here begins the religious recognition of human personality. The Bundehesh gives as the significance of the myth which brings forth man from the seed of Gâyomarḍ in the form of a tree, from whose leaves sprang ten varieties of men and women, the sexes inseparable from each other and not to be told apart, — that the soul being first made, and placed in the body as its instrument, lifts this by its invisible power to the upright form; and, like a tree, strives upward, that it may come to the Yazatas, or heavenly ones.[3] "To the progenitors of mankind Ahura said, 'Speak ye good words, do good acts, yield not to the evil ones; be perfect.'"[4] The destiny of men and spirits hangs on the majesty of Truth, and on the weakness and self-destruction of Falsehood. Ahriman's fatality is that he chooses a lie, and so sees nothing truly, blundering till it is too late to save himself; while Ahura, because he *is* truth, foresees the tendencies of the world, and wins the conflict before it begins.

[1] Harlez, ii. 46.

[2] *Fravardîn-Yasht.* The Bundehesh gathers up chronological data covering zodiacal periods with ethical and moral personages; xxxiv.

[3] *Bundehesh,* xv.; Justi.

[4] Ibid., xxxiii.

And when he foretells the issue to his great enemy, so overwhelming is the presence of Truth that Ahriman at the first third of what he hears, bends in fear; at the second, falls on his knees; at the third, flees and buries himself in darkness for three thousand years. So inestimable and imperishable is the Law of Truth embodied in its great Prophet, that the seed of Zoroaster is held under the guardianship of a million Fravashis of the Pure.[1]

[1] *Bundehesh*, xxxiii.

III.

ZARATHUSTRA.

And since he foretells the issue to his great enemy, so overwhelming is the presence of Truth that Ahriman at the first third of what he hears, bends in fear; at the second, falls on his knees; at the third, flees and buries himself in darkness for three thousand years. So incalculable and imperishable is the Law of Truth embodied in its great Prophet, that the seed of Zoroaster is held under the guardianship of a million Fravashis of the Pure.[1]

[1] [illegible]

ZARATHUSTRA.

IT is remarkable that a religion which represents the worship of personality in its intensest degree should have been destined to lose almost every personal record of its origin. Zoroaster is the obscurest figure in the line of prophets and messiahs.[1] It is even uncertain, notwithstanding Spiegel's strong impression of unity in the final form of the Avesta, whether the personal references, either in the oldest or latest parts of that work of ages, point to any one historical founder or systematizer of the faith. Such have been the fortunes of the Avesta, that not only have the greater portion of its original books (nosks) been lost, but the heroic traditions of the Iranian race, which might have thrown light upon its religious history, can be brought into connection therewith only by the very imperfect hints and incidental notices contained in three or four chapters. The passages in which Zarathustra is either referred to or introduced as speaking in person, which are made the most of in Haug's translation, are not of decisive importance. Even the striking passage in the Çrosh-Yasht, which ascribes to him the authorship of the five Gâthâs,[2] does not conclusively prove historic personality; and the prophet comes before us mainly as an ideal personage. Whether calling men to repentance and choice between good and evil, or conversing with Ahura; whether in prayer, in ritual service, or in temptation; whether

[1] See Spiegel (*Königlich bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, January, 1867), who shows, by a complete analysis of authorities, how entire this uncertainty is.

[2] *Yaçna*, lvi.

exalted or persecuted, — he is the official and chosen instrument of his God. The human element is absorbed in the divine function of propagator of the law through the miraculous power of the Word. He expresses no sense of humility in view of his great mission; he performs no heroic act. No sympathy is sought in his behalf. And all the apparent records of his life might easily be the constructed tradition of a body of priests. Moses, Buddha, Jesus, of whom much the same officialism is true, though in different ways, had the advantage of written records. And this is also true of Confucius, who enters no other than natural claims. But the founder of the Iranian religion could have had no aid from writing; and the Iranian Word, by whomsoever spoken, must have been committed solely to the energy of the moral idea, to the antagonism of good with evil, to the inspiration of will by a common impulse.

The name Zarathustra, at all events, cannot of itself stand for any special individual, since the numerous interpretations of it, — as "star of gold," "star of life," "singer of praise," "brave camel owner," and "seed of Venus" (Ishtar), — are becoming superseded (at least so far as they are supposed to designate such individuality) by that which explains it as the generic name of the Iranian high-priesthood, and as simply meaning "spiritual elder" or "chief."[1] Following Pârsî traditions,[2] Haug regards *Çpitama*, frequently used in connection with Zarathustra, as the real or family name of the prophet. We have here another illustration of the historic law that those names by which traditional founders of religions have come down to us, are simply designations of spiritual or ecclesiastical function; such as *the* Buddha, *the* Messiah (Christ), *the*

[1] That the word has a superlative (*Zarathustrôtemô*), seems decisive of the question. Haug has strongly insisted on this meaning (*Essays*, etc.), p. 296; somewhat similar was the suggestion of the learned Anthony Troyer, in his notes to the *Dabistan*, i. 212.

[2] So Ctesias; Spiegel: *Avesta*, iii. lxxvii. So Franck: *Etudes Orientales*, p. 222.

Zarathustra, — names perhaps given to individuals but little known, perhaps themselves merely personifications, as points of historic attachment for the religions in those earlier traditions or associations from which they sprung.

This generic quality of the name explains the great variety of dates given for the age of Zarathustra, running all the way from 6000 to 600 B.C.;[1] which has led scholars to suppose that there must have been two or more of the name,[2] — the fact being that the name is simply messianic, and employed to supply a personal centre to all obscure and yet important movements in Iranian history. Assuming Çpitama Zarathustra to have been the chief personage of the Avestan religion, this question of his age would lead into discussions that promise little satisfaction: such as where Airyana-vaêjô, his favorite region, may have been; where Pourushaçpa, his father, may have lived; where the Hystaspes or Vîstâçpa, whom he is said in the Avesta to have converted, may have reigned.[3] Two points may be held as settled: First, the author of the oldest parts of the Avesta cannot have been far removed in date from the Vedic period, with which they are closely connected; and, second, the Greek writers[4] of the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ could not possibly have referred him to so remote an antiquity as many thousand years before their own day, if he had lived in the time of Hystaspes, the father of Darius I., only two hundred years previous. Only later writers, many centuries after Christ, — for

[1] Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xix. 22); Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* i. 673; Shea's *Mirkhond*, 274; Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris;* Pliny: *Natural History*, xxx. Anquetil-Duperron and Hyde were the first moderns who adopted the latter date. They are followed by Franck: *Etudes Orientales*, p. 213.

[2] Stanley, *Lives of Philosophers*, counts six of the name, and of all nations.

[3] See Movers: *Die Phönizier*, i. 259. Rawlinson (*Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, xv. 245). Roth: *Gesch. uns. abendländ. Phil.* i. 349. Harlez: Preface to *Avesta*, i. 15.

[4] Xanthus of Lydia, Aristotle, etc. Haug: *Lecture on Zoroaster*, 1868. Hermippus (250 B.C.) speaks of two million verses by Zoroaster; a pure impossibility, even in the credulity of tradition, if he lived only four hundred years previously.

example, all the Mahometan historians,[1] — place him in this Achæmenidan period.[2] The extravagantly early date, 6000 B.C., on the other hand, is probably constructed out of the Babylonian tradition, recorded by Berosus, that Zoroaster was the first of a line of Median kings who ruled in that city in the third millennium before Christ. The number "6000" is a round number in Babylonian chronology, and signifies, says Haug, "great antiquity." The cosmic system of the Mazdean books places him three thousand years after the beginning of the intermixture of good and evil in the universe, six thousand years after the creation of the earth, that is, in the middle of time; of course, a requirement of the astronomico-religious myth.[3] The Median magi doubtless deified Zoroaster, and identified him with Zrvan-akarana (Time without bounds) in later times, if they did not originate this personation of what in the Avesta is simply a neuter term of relation.[4] The Avesta, however, gives as little reason for making Zarathustra a priest-king, as for supposing him the Time-fountain of Ormuzd and Ahriman. The uncertainty of the whole question of Çpitama's date is indicated by the differences between the almost equally valuable estimates of Haug,[5] Rapp,[6] Duncker,[7] and Harlez,[8] which cover a period of four hundred years between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries before Christ.[9]

[1] See Roth: *Geschichte unserer abendländ. Phil.* i. 351.

[2] The confidence with which Roth (*Gesch. uns. abend. Phil.* vol. i.), speaks of this date shows how much has been done since his work appeared.

[3] See Windischmann: *Zoroastrische Studien*, p. 162. Roth (*Gesch. uns. abend. Phil.*, 1862, vol. i., 380–390) ingeniously argues that the Vîstâspa of the Avestan Yashts was Hystaspes, father of Darius, king of Bactria, subdued by Cyrus; that on Darius's accession to the throne of Cambyses, he made Zoroastrianism the religion of the Persian empire.

[4] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic* (English edition), p. 229.

[5] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 299.

[6] *Zeitschr. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xix. 27.

[7] *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii. 317.

[8] *Avesta*, i. 14.

[9] Windischmann, *Zoroastrische Studien*, pp. 260–313, gives the fullest account of the testimonies of the ancients concerning the age of Zoroaster. See also Roth, as above.

The nativity of the prophet is another mystery. Was he Chaldean, Median, Bactrian? Here is fine hunting-ground for the Bibliolaters, Christian and Perso-Arabian. Was he not a servant of Jeremiah, or an associate of Noah or Abraham,[1] or even of Adam?[2] Whether Spiegel[3] and Duperron[4] have better reasons for placing his birth in western Iran, in contact with their favorite Semitic race, than have Ctesias in ancient, and Haug,[5] Duncker,[6] Harlez,[7] and Rapp,[8] in modern times, for regarding Bactria as his home, — certain it is that the Avesta itself, both in language and geography, is decidedly an Old Bactrian work, and speaks of the more occidental portions of the Iranian plateau as infidel or accursed. I can see no good reason for dissociating the person or the faith of Zarathustra from their Vedic connections, either in place or time.

On the whole, all speculation concerning Çpitama is confused by the fact that the Avesta itself was brought together long after its earliest portions were composed; and with such an intermingling of history and tradition, of legend and hymn, and prayer and formula and doctrine, that no biographical inference can be drawn from any portion of its books.

The development of the Zarathustrian Idea or Faith follows a similar track to that of the New Testament Christ. In the earlier parts of the Avesta, Zoroaster hears the revelation of Ahura as a man, as it rises upon him out of the sacrificial flame.[9] It is industrial and moral; commands agriculture,[10] and the choice between sin and righteousness, for life and for death; denounces the Daevas,[11] their worshippers and their spells. The chosen messenger

[1] See Harlez: *Avesta*, i. 18 *n.*

[2] Ernest de Bunsen: *Hidden Wisdom*, etc.

[3] *Erân. Alterth.*, i. 676, 684.

[4] *Avesta.* Also Roth: *Stud. d. abend. Phil.* i. 378.

[5] *Essays*, etc., p. 297.

[6] *Gesch. d. Alterth.* ii. 315.

[7] *Avesta*, i. 17.

[8] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesell.* xix.; also Rawl. *Anc. Mon.* iii. 380.

[9] *Yaçna*, xxx.; Haug.

[10] Honors the Soul of the Earth, — the Cow. i. *Gâthâ.*

[11] *Yaçna*, xxxiii.

of Ahura vows fidelity: "I have believed in thee. I will destroy the wicked and comfort the good. Grant Thou me goodness.[1] I will proclaim the Best. May perfect Wisdom direct me, — He whom my prayers pursue, Life of the good mind and word and deed."[2] He complains of desertion and neglect: "Whither shall I turn? None of the shepherds, none of the rulers, respect me. I am helpless. Look down on me while I implore thee, Ahura, to grant the comfort which one gives his friend. The wicked holds the goods of the just. Whoso works with righteousness in my cause, to him shall be given both the earthly goods and the spiritual life as a reward; for thou possessest all, who art my assurance."[3] "To Zarathustra Ahura commits the good of the world (settlements.)"[4] He is the friend of Ahura, "uttering the sacred hymns (*māthra*), the laws given by my wisdom," says the Earth-Soul.[5] "It is said that to Çpitama Ahura granted the best good, by reason of his sincere worship, forever; and he gives the same to all who keep the words and do the acts enjoined by the holy law.[6] In the most of these earliest Gâthâs, Zoroaster is not even a chosen prophet, but simply a man in earnest to seek the truth and proclaim it, amidst hostile bands, at the head of a few followers. But it is not easy to separate this stage from that of miracle and special messianic sense, which seems to have sprung directly from it. The story of his temptation by Ahriman[7] is believed by Haug to be an ancient lyric. The Evil One recognizes that this new-comer is destined to enthrone righteousness, and tries in vain to seduce him from the work appointed; but he is so baffled and dazed by the Divine Word, and Zarathustra's vow to fulfil it, that with the whole devil-troop he casts himself down into hell; nor does he ever become visible,

[1] *Yaçna*, xliii.; Haug.
[2] *Yaçna*, xlv.; Haug.
[3] *Yaçna*, xlvi.; Haug.
[4] Haug.
[5] *Yaçna*, l.; Haug.
[6] *Yaçna*, liii.; Haug.
[7] *Vendidâd*, ix.

either of himself or through them, afterwards, but works in darkness and unseen. This last is probably a later feature, but the temptation story itself represents a somewhat more official function in the reformer than that earliest stage which we have pointed out. Here we find little or no ritualism, no official glory, no pre-existence, no supernatural power. His relations are human, his interests domestic as well as public; his father's name is given as a Soma-saint, and the marriage of his daughter is mentioned.[1] The Bundehesh doubtless goes back to this early period in reciting the names of his progenitors and children, counting three daughters and three sons, one of whom was the chief of priests, the ancestor of all later Mobads.[2]

Later, the Haoma-Yasht introduces Zarathustra as conversing with the personified Sacrificial Plant; learning that by preparing and offering it, the blessing of giving birth to great deliverers was received by saints of old, and by his own father last; and praying that he may obtain from it absolute power to go through the world, destroying the evil mind.[3] In the later parts of the Yaçna he receives the supernal formula or prayer, "which was before the worlds," and whose recitation gives eternal life;[4] a Word so holy that whoever leaves out any portion of it in muttering shall be cast into hell.[5] Here Zarathustra is spoken of as one of the five rulers or chiefs who are placed over each "region" of Iran,—probably as priest, and evidently represents the priestly authority as such.

Later still, in the Yashts, are revealed to him the twenty mystic names of Ahura, and the supernatural spells for averting evil.[6] He is commanded to keep their mystery a secret from all but the priests (*Zaota*).[7] All the divine

[1] *Yaçna.* l. 17; lii. 3; Harlez. But Haug translates differently. Spiegel is confusing as to this matter of the daughter.

[2] *Bundehesh*, xxx. 11.

[3] *Yaçna*, ix.

[4] *Yaçna*, xix. 2, 3.

[5] *Yaçna*, xix. 12–15.

[6] *Ormazd-Yasht; Ardibahist-Yasht.*

[7] *Khordad-Yasht.*

beings and powers by whose aid men are saved, are laid open to his spirit.[1] The Fravardîn-Yasht pronounces him first of priests, warriors, husbandmen; first teacher of purity, and destroyer of Daevas; in whom was revealed the whole Word, and whom the immortals desired as lord and master of the worlds; by whose birth and growth trees and streams had increase, and all creatures were made to shout for joy: "Hail, fire-priest (*Âthrava*), Çpitama Zarathustra, born for us, to offer sacrifice for us, and spread abroad the holy rite and law!" In the Hâdôkt-Nask his words are treated as sovereign spells. Later still we have benedictions (*Afringâns*) on kings in his name.[2] The Vendidâd is mainly made up of revelations to him as the mediator of truth to men. It has been truly said, that "no heathen religion is so distinctly stamped with the idea of doctrinal revelation as this."[3]

In the Vispered, Zarathustra is lord of earthly creatures, as Ahura of heavenly.[4] The rites are all formulized, the priestly functions set, the Mazdean priest is the disciple of Zarathustra,[5] and the services rehearse the means of salvation bestowed by Mazda, by Zarathustra, and by the chief of Zarathustras (*Zarathustrôtemô*).[6]

And in the still later mythology, the future saviours are his descendants. The last and greatest, Sosyosh, is miraculously born of a virgin by his inspiration. Still the veneration grew. Greek writers ascribed to him millions of verses,[7] covering, according to Arabic writers, a thousand ox-skins. An immense quantity of literature actually became current as his. Suidas, Pliny, and others refer to him as a great authority on natural science;[8] and the Pârsî traditions make him the author of the twenty-one nosks of the Avesta, of which but a small part remains. Pliny

[1] *Mihr and Fravardîn-Yashts.*
[2] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 223.
[3] Döllinger, p. 381.
[4] *Vispered*, ii. 6; xix. 7, 8.
[5] *Vispered*, vi. 6.
[6] *Vispered*, x.
[7] See Pliny, v. 422.
[8] Pliny, vi. 447, 448.

records the story that "his brain pulsated so strongly on the day of his birth as to repel the hand laid upon it,—a presage of his future wisdom."[1] The Perso-Arabic mythologists who have, if possible, less historic sense than those of Mediæval Christendom, have surrounded him with the usual halo of supernatural phenomena, which are rehearsed with spiritual Sufi interpretations in the Dabistân. Torn from the womb by wild beasts, he is rescued and restored thereto by a beautiful youth, coming forth from a mountain with the Word and the Branch, who says to his mother, "Fear not, thy son shall be the prophet of the just God."[2] He laughs at the instant of birth, in token probably either of triumph or good-will.[3] The efforts of wicked kings and magicians to destroy him are thwarted by the brute creatures, to which he brings relief.[4] He is transported like Mahomet to heaven, subjected to supernatural bodily changes, instructed of God, without mediation of angels, in all mysteries and powers. The Sassanian saints of the Avestan faith repeat his miracles,[5] and the Mahometan mystics rehearse his parables with transcendental exegesis.[6] This idealization supplied the one form of religious tribute which Iranian will-worship lacked; namely, the pantheistic. The Bundehesh says the Persian Mobads all trace back their lineage through Zoroaster to Manuscithra.[7] All the phases familiar to our studies of the messianic idea in its development in other religions are found in the Zarathustra legend. While the older Avesta, at least, is comparatively sober in its tone, the moral interest quite absorbing the theological and even the imaginative, and the prophet, though of surpassing strength and wisdom, does not aim to violate natural laws, but to teach the dignity of labor and the holiness of truth, later tradition has carried him through

[1] Pliny, ii. 155. [2] *Dabistan*, i. 216. [3] Ibid., 218. [4] Ibid., 220–21.
[5] *Dabistan*, i. 304. [6] Ibid, i. 364. [7] *Bundehesh*, xxxiii.

the whole catena of official signs. He leaves his native land, goes into the mountains to prepare for his mission, lives seven years in a grotto amidst mystic emblems devoted to Mithra (the type of the future cave of Mithraic rites), fasts in the desert, is tempted by a personal devil, walks on the sea, performs wonderful cures, and overrules the elements. He withdraws to a burning mountain for thirty years; comes unharmed out of the flames, exhorting to faith in righteousness.[1] Clement of Alexandria reports from Plato, that he returned to life on a funeral pile after having lain dead for twelve days.[2] The mystical oracles, brought together and inscribed with his name in the Platonic schools, have no relation to the Zoroaster of the Avesta save as indicating his ideal reputation as the father of mystery and magic,[3] and showing how wide a field of thought and tendency the name of a far-off Master of religious traditions may be stretched to cover. As for Mahometan and Perso-Arabic fictions about him, — from Firdûsî to Mirkhond and the Dabistân, — they have no limit nor law. I select this from the Dabistân. When Zoroaster was in heaven, he entreated of God, "Close the door of death against me; let that be my miracle." But God said, "If I close the gates of death against thee, thou wilt not be satisfied; nay, thou wouldst entreat death of me."[4] The mythical history of Zoroaster in the Avesta is moulded upon earlier traditions, and fully illustrates the continuity of religious ideas and forces.[5] As receiver of the law of Ahura, he repeats Yima (first king) and Gayômard (first man). As Nature hails his advent, and Ahriman is struck with terror, so it was with his prototypes, the

[1] See Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xix. 34).

[2] Clement of Alexandria: B. v. chap. 14; Plato: *Republic*, B. x. chap. 13.

[3] Pliny, B. xxx., chap. 2.

[4] *Dabistân*, i. 263.

[5] According to Darmesteter, he comes from the old mythology of the storm-cloud. *Orm. et Ahrim.*, p. 194

former messengers of truth. In him the achievements of the long line of Fire-saints and heroes are re-enacted, — of Tistrya, Verethraghna, Apãm-napâṭ, Âtar, Gayômard; "he is the man of the Light hidden in the Cloud." This is Darmesteter's designation of the Iranian messiahs. For in all the features of the legend he discerns transformations of the primitive Aryan myth of the storm-cloud, the nucleus of Vedic inspiration also. Thus Pourushaçpa, his father, "man of horses," is the "atmospheric divinity of light," victorious in the elemental war. The powers that assail him in his infancy are the old spirits of the storm under new names. The "temptation" of the prophet by Ahriman, with its sharp interchange of words, is again the roar of the storm, mingling its strange enigmatic noises; only they are now in form of questions that may be resolved on penalty of death, or of replies that meet threat with threat, proposal with contempt, and rage with rebuff. His conversations with Ahura even, by which the law is revealed, are also the direct representatives of the thunder that rolled back and forth through the old Aryan heavens. By this ingenious appliance of evolution, all the voices of this great drama of Dualism, of whatever sort, are absorbed into the primal storm-music of the "holy mountain" of the atmosphere,[1] as symbolic types and historic germs of the Zoroastrian law.[2]

Without accepting this result in all its minute details, we at least recognize the law of historic derivation which lies at its base. Whatever obscurity covers the personality of Zarathustra, the central doctrine of his faith is traceable with certainty as far back as the fifth century before Christ, at which period Darius wrote the inscription,[3] — "*Ormuzd is a great God: he made the earth and the heavens; and he created man.*"

[1] *Vendidâd*, xxii. 53. [2] Darmesteter: *Orm. et Ahrim.*, p. 207.
[3] Inscription of Mount Elvend.

It has been commonly supposed that the reformation effected by Zarathustra in the old Aryan religion, consisted in concentrating on the name of Ahuramazda the veneration before distributed among a great number of deities, especially those mentioned in the Avesta, whether as good or evil powers. The most of these Avesta gods belong also to the Veda, and probably, in one form or another, were inherited from the older Aryan stock.[1] A like simplification also took place in India, where all earlier deities were, by priestly authority and intellectual abstraction, absorbed into the unity of Brahma. In the latter case, however, the tendency was towards impersonality, while in Zoroastrianism it was in the direction of an intenser personal worship. A closer resemblance may be found in the change of the old Hebrew *Elôhîm* into the distincter will of Jahveh.

But there is evidently more than a mere transfer of worship from many gods to one God involved in the Zoroastrian reform. The Avesta describes a practical war against Daeva-worshippers, — men regarded as infidels, destroyers of cattle as well as souls. Their offence was, — unless the Avesta is greatly misinterpreted,— choice of leaders (*Kavis* and *Karapans*), who led their souls to ruin through falsehood and excessive use of the Soma, not with religious awe, but as an intoxicating drink.[2] A Puritan revival, a practical protest in the name of conscience against the degeneracies of an organized church, — if such a church can be conceived of as existing among the early Aryans, — would thus lie at the root of Zoroaster's dualistic religion of battle against wrong. But his ethical revolution was also, in Haug's view, associated with the change from pastoral to agricultural life; and it cannot be denied that

[1] Duncker: *Gesch. d. Alterth.*, ii. 332; Lassen, Roth, etc. But the elements of Zoroaster are, as we have seen, in the oldest Aryan mythology: so that the special direction given to these elements in his name it is a matter of no slight difficulty to determine.

[2] See Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 290.

this advance in social conditions has been the secret of the most important steps of progress in the early history of man. We have already seen that Turanian nomadic tribes were among the enemies of the Iranian settlements; and their connection with "Drujas" and the worship of "Daevas" is now and then evident.[1] But in Haug's view these enemies of the settlement were Vedic Aryans.[2] When once, however, a protest of the kind suggested in this theory had taken place, then a new name of deity, a reversal in the estimate of the old gods, a reconstruction of the traditional names and legends in the new ethical interest, a fanatical intensity in the sense of personal dependence and divine favor, religious intolerance, and a warfare more or less bitter with the partisans of the older belief, — in other words, the phenomena which the Avesta describes, — became natural results. Nevertheless, as we have already shown, many of these supposed evidences of such a schism from the Vedic Aryan gods and beliefs are imaginary, and the theory itself is without sufficient grounds.[3]

The main difference between the Vedic and Avestan religions is, that in the latter the Vedic worship of natural powers and phenomena is superseded by a more distinctly ethical and personal interest. Ahuramazda, the Living Wisdom, replaces Indra, the lightning god; whose war against the cloud-serpent to release the fertilizing rain is supplanted by the war of good-will against evil-will. But we shall err if we suppose the new interest to be moral as distinguished from physical. Progress is not by leaps, but by continuities. The difference is that a more vigorous personal motive is transfused through the same physical forces, which are no less the objects of desire and fear in the Avestan prayers than in the Vedic hymns; and as the moral element is by

[1] *Fravardîn-Yasht*, 38; *Yaçna*, xi. 21.

[2] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 293

[3] See chapter on *The Moral Sense* (Elements).

no means wanting in the Veda, its absorbing power in the Avesta is but the natural development of the older belief that the cosmos represents in its opposing forces the inward strife of the soul. In other words, the transition is from a child-life in Nature, — fitful, susceptible, unconscious, to the life of conscious will ; the first necessity of which step is that the host of elemental powers should come into relation to a Central, Creative, Inspiring Force. The earnestness of the experience demands that this Force should be Holiness, Justice, and Good-will. These were already involved in Vedic conceptions. Varuṇa, undoubtedly the original of Ahura, was the god of moral as well as of physical or cosmical limits. Agni must be invoked with pure heart; Sûrya constructs or measures out the worlds, from a desire to benefit men.[1] But all these and other powers are held in equal honor by the worshippers, while in Varuṇa only is the moral law strongly emphasized. A great step was taken when this old Asura was enthroned as the one and perfect ideal; when the name of God meant righteousness, and "purity of heart, word, and deed" became the "Gâyatrî" among texts. The moral impulse is more clear and emphatic in the Avesta than is the monotheistic conviction; the reaction against polytheism can hardly be called absolute. Ahura himself was not a new god, or even a new name; and his ancient laws, to which the Avesta refers its own claims, are Varuṇa's eternal paths, his all-seeing Eye, his inevitable Bond.

Ahura is the Vedic Asura who stands in the later Indian hymns for a power hostile to the gods. The Asuras are sometimes the robbers who hide the clouds,[2] whom Indra punishes, taking their castles and cities in the sky,[3] whose spoils the Açvins bring from far;[4] sometimes they

[1] *Rig-Veda*, i. 160-64.
[2] Ibid., i. 1 ; vi. 5 (Langlois), and throughout *Rig-Veda*.
[3] Ibid., *passim*. So *Yajur-Veda*, Muir, ii. 381.
[4] Ibid., v viii. i. 31. (Langlois).

are apparently the same as Dasyus,[1] low-born aborigines, whom the Aryas fought as unbelievers and brutes. In this sense it is erroneously supposed[2] that the word is formed from *a* privative and *sûra* (god),—that is, godless being;[3] but this is not the original meaning of Asura, which stands for the very highest form of deity, in the sense of "life-possessing," "life-giving." To Savitri, Indra, Varuṇa, the title of "great Asura" is given.[4] "The children of the great Asura" are "the heroes who uphold the heavens." Asura it is who "delivers from sins; who props up the sky, measures the earth, and pervades all worlds."[5] These descriptions of the Vedic Varuṇa might be applied with all force to the Avestan Ahura. "Prajâpati [lord of creatures]," says the Brâhmaṇa,[6] "created Asuras [living powers] with his breath (*asu*). Therein is their Asura-nature. Having created them, he regarded himself as their father; afterwards he made the Pitṛis." Here the Asura holds a secondary position, but still one of honor.

Another legend hints the occasion of the fall of the Asuras from their high estate. The Devas[7] and Asuras, both descendants of Prajâpati, inherited truth and falsehood in speech. Both were alike in speaking truth and falsehood. Then the Devas chose truth, rejecting deceit; the Asuras chose deceit, rejecting truth. Then came war, till the perpetually-invading Asuras were worsted and driven away."[8] This is precisely the Avesta story of good and evil powers, with a change of parts. It shows also that the original attribute of supreme power, at first belonging to both names in common, was divided on the two, according to moral distinctions, as already shown.

[1] *Rig-Veda*, vii. vii. 4, 8 (Langlois).
[2] Langlois: *Rig-Veda*, p. 55.
[3] See Weber's *Indian Literature*, Eng. p. 302. Manu. xi. 20.
[4] *Rig-Veda*, i. iii. 7; i. i. v. 14; iii. ii. ix. 4; viii. v. ii. 11.
[5] Ibid., i. i. v. 14.
[6] *Taittirîya Brâhm.* Muir, i. 23.
[7] "The Indo-Iranian *daiva*, 'god,' Sanscrit *deva*, becomes in Zend *daêva*, 'demon.'" Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 265.
[8] *S'atapetha Brâhm.* Muir, iv. 59, 108.

Even in their defeat the Asuras retained their reputation as the oldest and greatest of the gods. They were said to have possessed the ambrosia (*Amrita*) lodged in the mouth of Souchna (the magician); so that whereas the dead Deva must remain dead, the dead Asura could be restored to life. Indra changed himself into an atom of honey, which Souchna ate; and then into a bird, who bore it away in his mouth.[1] If the Amrita be the same as the Soma, we may connect this cycle of legends as to the precedence of the Asuras to the Devas, with the claim of the Avesta faith to trace back its origin to the earliest dispensers of the Soma to mankind.[2] In such passages as this of the tenth book of the Rig-Veda, "the sages behold with heart and mind the bird illuminated by the wisdom of the Asura," we see that there was a better Vedic foundation for the exalted meaning given to the name Ahura by Zarasthustra than the war of the Devas against the Asuras afforded. May it not lead us back to the grand significance of the word, before the Deva-worship, representing a later form of religious consciousness, had become organized with its priesthood and rites, so as to set aside the earlier and simpler conception of deity as "Living Power" or "Breath"? Or did Zarathustra recur to this earlier and simpler conception when he would protest against forms which seemed ill in accord with its ethical contents? Many such intimations in the Avesta point to the older Aryan beliefs. It retains that which was probably the oldest name for fire-priest, Atharvan, — since the Rig-Veda describes Atharvan as "the first who strengthened the gods by sacrifice,"[3] calls Agni his child,[4] and Manu his friend.[5] He is even celebrated as the first deliverer of Agni from

[1] Kuhn: *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*, p. 144. See Anal. of Roth in Weber's *Ind. Stud.* iii. 466.

[2] *Haoma-Yasht*, *Yaçna*, ix.

[3] *Rig-Veda*, viii. iv. vii. 10. See also Gṛihya-Sûtras, *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* vii. 529.

[4] *Rig-Veda*, vii. vii. iii. 5.

[5] Ibid., i. v. xix. 16.

his cradle in the hollow of the wood (by friction?).[1] Both the Atharvans and the Angiras — probably the oldest of the priestly orders known to the Vedic Aryans — are objects of veneration in the Avesta. The Soma, earliest of sacrificial plants and inspiring drinks, is as highly exalted in the one faith as in the other.

It may, then, be that the Iranian and Vedic religions, as we now possess them, represent the somewhat differing results of a long period of separation dating back to a much earlier time than has been supposed. In this case, the Zarathustra of the Avesta may, as some have supposed, have been but one in a long line of priests of Ahuramazda, many of whom were his predecessors. His reformatory work may have been to give radical meaning and moral power to some tribal religious schism of earlier date, or to some inherited struggle against fetichistic or otherwise degrading tendencies, — perhaps against the raiders of barbarian Turan.

That the reformation embodied in the Avesta was the work of one man is obviously impossible; there is no such claim to be found in it. Zarathustra refers his religion to older times[2] and a series of antecedent revelations, though none of these are represented as of equal depth and power with his own. A long course of traditions and doctrinal preparation for his work is implied; and it is assumed that all the divine personages and functions in which it centres are familiar to his hearers. Nevertheless, the vigorous protest and summons in the earliest Gâthâs, their tone of personal assurance, the detail of private experiences and conversations with deity, are signs of an individual force that cannot be mistaken. The history of the Aryan schism, in which it is now by many scholars of repute believed that the religion of the Avesta was born, is

[1] Langlois on *Rig-Veda*, iv. v. 15, 73.

[2] The references to Yima, Kereçâçpa, and Thraêtona, as first propagators of the Soma sacrifice and servants of Ahura, claim primitive authority for the law.

not only utterly beyond our vision, but highly improbable. The very name Zarathustra which embodies it, is, in part at least, a generic title. But the remoteness of the spirit and purpose of Ahuramazda from that of the Vedic hymns, really indicates that with him we enter on a new phase of historic development. A gulf opens which, while it does not imply a break in the continuity of experience, yet can be likened only to that which seems to occur in a personal life, when one becomes conscious of himself, of his character, of his needs, of a purpose in living, and of a will within him capable of fulfilling the ideal which these inspire. To explain a movement like this in the life of a people, no individual priest or prophet can be held sufficient. This call to choose between two masters who are already familiar to the conscience, to whatever it may refer, proves that the movement rested on a moral experience of the most public and social kind. The earliest Gâthâs do not seem to be a full-formed system of faith; but they are the outburst of certain recognized and well-understood elements of ideal purpose, into commanding power. Whatever the immediate cause of this crisis, — whether a change of social conditions, or a new relation with outside tribes or beliefs, — the most that Zarathustra could do was to energize and direct it as a given tendency. At the time when those passages were composed, which describe a social organization in which Zarathustra was one of four or five chiefs of classes in each region, the Iranian Church must have been fully formed. But the oldest Gâthâs have little ecclesiasticism as compared with later parts of the Avesta. They have no genii, nor hierarchical series of powers; they are simply a human protest against unseen powers, believed to be evil and destructive, in the name of others held to be righteous and preservative of body and soul.[1]

[1] See Harlez: *Avesta*, ii. 29.

One thing is certain. In Iran there grew up what India never saw, — a consciousness of world-purpose, ethical and spiritual; a reference of the ideal to the future rather than to the past; a promise of progress. Yama, the Aryan god of the future world, became Yima, a human ideal of earthly bliss in this world; and from him downward through the earthly ages flows the ever-growing stream of revelation, — saviour after saviour, — to the day when all evil is to be swallowed up, and only righteousness endure. A motive force of ideal will had entered on its way, whose impulse the world was never to lose. And this is it: that the human will in its terrible struggle with Evil, its law of death, in its twofold possibility and attraction in every sensation and every thought, is yet bound for good; that the law of the universe means its deliverance and eternal triumph; that throughout its mighty cyclic year every depth of moral night heralds the dawn of a redeeming day.

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[1] See Tiele, Avesta, [illegible]

IV.

THE AVESTA LITERATURE.

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THE Pârsî tradition that the Bible of their fathers was destroyed by the Macedonian, rests on no historical evidence. How much of the Avestan literature has really been lost, we shall probably never know. Even when we have dismissed Hermippus' story that two million verses,[1] written on a thousand parchments, were contributed by Zarathustra to human knowledge, the later claim that there were originally twenty-one books or Nosks, treating of all possible subjects of thought, savors too much of mythical predetermination to fare any better at the hands of historical criticism; although the later Pehlevî writers describe the contents of these Nosks,[2] of which the present Avesta is said to contain but one complete, with fragments of two or three others, the number twenty-one is probably invented to correspond with the number of words in the holiest text of the Avesta. Much of what is lost is undoubtedly commentary on older texts. What remains is made up of text, the Avesta proper, and Zend commentary. It is in an extremely confused and fragmentary condition, owing in part to the fact that it was gathered up and arranged during the storms of the Macedonian period, or else after the Parthian conquerors had added their hostile interference to that of the Greeks, amidst the revolutionary reconstruction of Persian nationality by the first Sassanian king.[3]

[1] According to an Arab writer.

[2] See Haug: *Essays*, etc., pp. 1241–44.

[3] Third century, A.D. The Avesta was not only gathered up at this time, in all probability, but translated also, in a free way, into Pehlevî (Huzvâresh), — a language largely Semitic, used in the coins and inscriptions of that period, whose script appears much earlier, probably

Nevertheless, it seems improbable that the hands which reverently sought out and brought together the precious members of this long-lost literary Isis, would have made much important change in the ancient form and features. Subsequent political rulers of Iran, especially the Mahometan, have probably spared these old records, written in a language which they could not comprehend. What influence the Semitic races of western Iran may have exerted on the formation of these Scriptures, before even the few fragments which have come down to us reached their present state, it is impossible to say. The language of the original, which some scholars have called Old Bactrian, is of great antiquity,—differing from the Vedic Sanskrit only as one Greek dialect differs from another,[1] and mainly in consequence of phonetic changes. But the alphabet in which it is now written is Semitic, its signs mainly coincident with the Pehlevî, of which it seems to be an expansion,[2] and belongs to the Sassanian period; whether also to an earlier period is now hardly matter of question.[3] But wherever or however first committed to writing, the old Avesta had its origin in eastern Iran. It regards the western regions as infidel; it knows nothing of the great cities of Persia in the eighth century before Christ; and the affinities of the language alone are decisive of the question. Moreover, the Zend, the translation and commentary in Pehlevî, made either by the Sassanians, or found by them as a survival from Achæmenidan and even probably from old Assyrian times[4]—could not have

even in the time of Seleucidæ (Levy: *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxi. 445). Perhaps signs of it appear in the Achæmenidan times. The later Pehlevî writings speak of a copy of the translation of Avesta, with the Zend, as destroyed by Alexander in (the fourth century B.C.). In the Pehlevî the Semitic words were read as Iranian equivalents. See Haug: *Essays*, etc. *König. bayer. Akad. d. Wissen.* February, 1869.

[1] See Haug: *Essays*, etc., pp. 69, 70. Duncker: *Gesch. d. Alterth.* ii.

[2] See Bollman: *Alphabeta.*

[3] Compare Duncker: *Gesch. d. Alterth.* ii. 381; and Spiegel (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* ix. 178).

[4] Haug: *Essays*, etc. p. 140.

been considered as of equal authority with the original Avesta; since we know[1] that for liturgical purposes the latter was used without translation, gloss, or comment, and even without separation into books.[2] This is evident from the old Pârsî manuscripts, from which the studies of Burnouf, Westergaard, Spiegel, and Haug (to whom we owe our real knowledge of the Avestan language) have been made.

These studies have also shown that the oldest part of the Avesta, the five Gâthâs (of which we shall speak hereafter), is composed in a language evidently older than even the Old Bactrian. But the difference is not so great as to prevent the whole book, when separated from its Zend-commentary portions, from standing by itself as a piece of unquestionable antiquity. To find the joints between these parts in each chapter is one of the great problems of modern Avestan research, and has already been pursued by Haug, whose exceedingly valuable translations have unhappily been brought to an end by his early death.[3]

The antiquity of the Avesta is shown by other evidences than its language. Greek authors, from the third century before Christ, down to the second century after Christ, speak of the writings of Zoroaster, the hymns and sacrifices of the Avesta, and even cite passages from the work. And their references to religious rites and customs coincide with its precepts, while the cuneiform inscriptions testify to the worship of Ahuramazda;[4] and in all the manu-

[1] From the Pârsî MSS. Origen, from Celsus, says the Avestan writings of Zoroaster were extant in his time; also Philo of Byblos. Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*), xix. 35.

[2] Harlez: *Avesta*, i. 25.

[3] The translations consulted by the author are those of *Spiegel* (German), complete; *Haug* (German and English), covering only a portion, but the most important, — more comprehensible and lyrical than *Spiegel*, as well as more biographical and practical, giving a hold on actual life; of *Harlez*, an admirable French translation of nearly all, — a man, before the others, of great clearnesss, candor, and learning.

[4] For these authorities see Harlez, i. 28–30.

scripts, some of which are four hundred years old, and all from eastern Persia, the text is substantially the same.[1]

Probably, as we have said, no Bible in the world is in a condition so unsatisfactory to the student of comparative religion or historical progress as the Avesta. The very name is of uncertain meaning, though the idea of revealed law, or the sum of knowledge, is evidently the main element in it. That Zend is the name of a language is an exploded error, and Zend-Avesta is a misleading word. The Avesta is the Law; the Zend is a version and interpretation thereof.[2] According to Masûdi, a heretic in Persia was called a *Zendik*, as adhering to a gloss instead of the original Scripture.[3] So the Pârsî scholars say *Avesta* and *Zend;* and doubtless the best title for the Old Bactrian compilation of these writings is *Avestan*,—that of their commentary, *Zend*.[4] Haug's definition of Zend, as a "gnosis," would be better if the old Persian religion, even in paraphrase, dealt at all in mystery or metaphysics. But after all, the Zend passages, so far as they are yet separated in Haug's translations, stand to the Avestan chiefly in the nature of added emphasis, or cumulative detail arising from the progress of the religion as an institution.

But to the difficulty of separating the elements of the text, and referring them to their historical order, is added the still greater difficulty of determining their original meaning.[5] The translator may lay his emphasis either on

[1] There are portions of the text that exist *only* in the Pehlevî; and mixed with these "Zend" portions are others in a still later tongue (the "Pâzend," properly modern Persian or Pârsî), which serves as their only medium.

[2] See Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 68. Harlez: *Avesta*, i. 27. Whitney: *Oriental Studies*, p. 171.

[3] Haug. p. 15.

[4] *Zend Studies* (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* ix. 698).

[5] Few copies are still extant. "Here is no elaborate verbal commentary, with grammatical and lexicographical resources, as in the study of the Vedas; only a translation which scholars describe as equally obscure with the text it professes to explain." Spiegel (*Zeitschr. d. Deustch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* i. 244). There is also a Sanskrit translation from this by Neriosengh. See Haug: *Essays*, etc., 33.

the traditional sense of the words, as determined by the successive phases of Iranian experience, or on their philological sense, as determined by their relations with the Sanskrit, the nearest sister tongue. Roth and Haug pursue the latter track. Spiegel, while inclining to the former, maintains that he has not neglected the other source of information. The appeal of both sides to Burnouf, the first great explorer of the original Avestan language, is proof of the very high merit of the scholar to whom Oriental studies, in every department, are immensely indebted for their actual scientific method.[1] The translations of Haug and Spiegel differ widely, as may be expected. The assumption that the whole of a literature accumulating through a long series of ages can be taken in sum as the best interpreter of its earliest products, gives Spiegel's work a somewhat suspicious aspect; yet the native commentators should doubtless receive great attention in cases of very doubtful philological decision. The story of Anquetil-Duperron's heroic pioneer work (1768–71) in opening the Avestan literature to Europe, of its inhospitable reception by Sanskrit scholars, and the very great imperfections of his French translation of these books, arising from his own total ignorance of the original, and even of the grammar of the Pehlevî version, which alone was used, — and from an almost equal ignorance on the part of his Hindu-Pârsî teachers, — are too well known to be referred to except by way of contrast with the far more trustworthy researches of the last half-century. The real help afforded at every stage of this progress by the merits, and even by the errors, of preceding scholars, is admirably

[1] The controversy on the subject of the two methods may be consulted in the *Jour. of the German Arch. Soc.*; and a full illustration of the extended confidence reposed by Spiegel in the whole testimony of Iranian literature, to the meaning of the oldest monuments of it, will be found in his three large volumes entitled *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, — a work which aspires to the thoroughness of Lassen's corresponding work on India, but cannot be said to equal it. The want of historical analysis and discrimination between the different epochs of literary testimony seems to me to weaken its value.

recognized in Haug's review of the whole history,[1] — a wonderful record of obstacles conquered, if not yet wholly removed. This achievement had hardly reached the end of its first great stage, when Roth's elaborate history of the relation of Western Philosophy to that of Egypt and Persia appeared in 1862, and the very imperfect and uncertain data of this highly interesting work, built largely on Anquetil-Duperron, are a striking illustration of the immense value of those original studies of the Avestan language which began with Eugène Burnouf. Behind the whole lies the main difficulty, — that the books themselves represent different periods in the progress of the language and the faith, and are, in all probability, the work of a long series of Mazdean priests and prophets.

The Bibles of the world are all of one description. They are the gradual deposits of the religious history of races, reaching from the deeply covered and now scarcely accessible strata of primitive or pre-historic times to their days of superficial decay or dissolution under the influences of science and ethnic communion; formations broken up, intermingled, and dislocated by the convulsions of ages; resultants of many successive reconstructions under the changing moods and phases of popular belief and the conscious interests of priestly schools; products of instincts which are not so intent on giving account of themselves to posterity or to art, as on heaping together, and adapting to present spiritual interests, all the words and deeds available for this end that have outlived generations, and borne down the precious legacy of beloved names and hopes. Nothing could possibly be conceived more unlike the infallibility and unchangeableness insisted on by their worshippers after the canons are closed, and a Bible becomes the authoritative standard of an instituted religion. These literary amalgams are for ages in-

[1] Literature of Pârsîs.

soluble; serving only to deepen the equal blindness of the bibliolater and the iconoclast, till scientific explorers have shown the landmarks of historic construction, and referred each fragment to the special tendencies of its age and author, known or unknown. Interpreted by these, a Bible becomes at last a datum of universal history, because a true picture of the entire religious and social consciousness of the people whence it sprung, and whose ideal it represents. What Ewald and Baur and Hilgenfeld and Kuenen have done for the Bible literature of the Hebrews and Christians, Haug and Roth and Windischmann have begun to accomplish for that of the Iranians. When thus reconstructed, the sequence of parts is as natural as the growth of a flower; and how complete this metamorphosis at the touch of historical science! What man cannot do with scattered stems and leaves and flowers of a plant,—restore the order of growth and the living connection of the parts,—he can accomplish for the Bibles which have been the flowers of his past ideals after they have ceased to live, and so make them capable of enduring functions, philosophical, ethical, spiritual. The Avesta is like the rest: it is a confused heap of inspirations, traditions, legends, hymns, laws, minute ritual precepts, abstract categories and distinctions implying some intellectual refinement, mingled with outpourings of genuine religious feeling, but covered up with elaborate formulas anxiously repeated, and set with sentences that served for spells,—every form of language by which the Iranian mind could express its travail to get into right accord with Nature and the conditions of human life.

The reader familiar with the imaginative riches of Hindu literature, with the mystic ardor of the Vedic poets, will find the Avesta, for the most part, greatly wanting in these poetic elements of style. It moves in a limited order of thought and topic, abounds in formulas and ritualistic

repetitions, and has so much the appearance of a manual prepared for religious instruction and service from existing materials, that one cannot help wondering if the early inspirations of the Mazdean reformation, the Rig-Veda of this noble faith, have been lost. Yet hymns are not wanting of a high order of poetic zeal and religious feeling, and a world of myth and legend is crowded into these liturgical fragments, as rich as the Vedic, and as thoroughly human as the Greek.

1. The Yaçna (Sanskrit, *yajña*, *offering*) is made up of seventy sections of hymn, praise, and prayer; the "second part" of which, consisting of "the five Gâthâs," is the oldest portion of the Avesta, and is spoken of in the Avesta itself as composed by Zarathustra. These are books of metrical lyrics, and biographical and doctrinal relations. Here, as we have already said, is the clear and simple substance of the faith, its natural and human side, the upspringing of its prophetic power. They resemble in their relative characteristics the Gâthâs of Buddhism, which, scattered metrical sentences through the Sûtras, represent primitive Buddhism, as it existed previous to its hierarchical day.[1] The rest of the Yaçna is later and more liturgical.

2. The Vendidâd (*vî-daeva-dâta*, law for repelling the Daevas) contains twenty-two chapters (*fargard*) of conversations between Ahuramazda and Zarathustra, which are made up of fragmentary legends of early ages (like the Hebrew "Book of Origins" compiled in the captivity), the myths of Yima, Thraêtona, Zarathustra, etc.; prescriptions about agriculture, and the treatment of animals, regarded as pure or impure, and the recognition of things dear to the earth, as distinct from things hateful to her; rituals of purification; efficacious prayers to all powers and saints; runes for conjuring away evil powers. The moral precepts are few and far between; all exhortations

[1] See author's *India*, p. 646.

are to definite concrete acts, and little stress is laid upon the motive; ethics are here absorbed in legal prescriptions. It is the Leviticus of the dualist, for whom Nature is portioned off between good and evil powers, and duty consists in serving each special object according to its kind. It assumes a state of society and faith in which the period of moral spontaneity has passed into the period of conformity and routine; in which the prophet is known only as a tradition, and the priest has gathered up his garments to mingle with rite and form.

3. The Vispered is a short work, once belonging to the Yaçna, made up of highly ritualized invocations and prayers, and sums up by enumeration the whole array of visible and invisible objects for prayer and praise.

4. The Yashts (much the same in meaning as Yaçna) are twenty-four pieces, each in celebration of some special genie, on whom is poured (as in the Rig-Veda of the Hindus) equal honor with every other in his special Yasht, showing in the fulness and utterness of the worship the tendency to bring all together into a kind of pantheistic unity; at the same time, the legendary history of each is rehearsed, making these Yashts the great source of our knowledge of Iranian mythology and its connection with the heroic ages of Iran. Here, then, we have a collection something like the Homeric hymns of Greece, where each deity receives highest veneration, in his own way and sphere, from all creatures that live. We have *Ardvî-çûra*, strongest of helpers, whose aid all powers at one or another time have sought in their need or in their passion; the star *Tistrya*, rain-bringer, and his battle with the Drought,—white horse with black; *Mithra*, inspirer of a Pindaric eloquence in the poet, who can find no limit to the strength, the splendor, the all-seeing, all-judging providence, and all-creating, all-delivering, and rejoicing energy of this Soul of the Sun; *Ormuzd*, who chants to

Zoroaster his multitudinous names, "coming for his help and joy;" the *Ferouers*, exhausting every conception of existence in detailed invocation of the ideal within and above the natural world.

5. The Khordah-Avesta, little Avesta, containing formulas for occasions and times, — a medley of later origin than the rest, and showing an advanced institutional stage, and at the same time a more elaborate enumeration of moral defects and special aspirations than any other portion. Note especially the Patets or confessions, which contain all the moralities of Christianity or of Judaism, mingled with the most puerile ceremonial observances, as equally binding with the inward virtues.

6. But older than these ritualistic portions of the Avesta, is the literature of the Sassanian revival of the faith. After the extinction of the Achæmenidan empire, native Mazdeism gave way, in some degree, to Hellenism and the traditions of Chaldean civilization. Under the Parthian dynasty it was still further depressed, though not extinguished: the coins bore Greek legends; the language became more Semitized than before; the Old Bactrian, in which the Avesta was composed, was practically a dead language, and the only familiar alphabet into which it could be translated was Semitic. The Sassanian revolution, however, restored the native religion. A proclamation of Khosrû Parvîz, a Sassanian king of the sixth century, reports that efforts had been made to collect the old Zoroastrian literature by princes of the Archæmenian and Parthian dynasties;[1] in which case the Sassanian revival must have had considerable resources at hand, and the acquaintance of the Persians with the traditions of their faith been more or less continuous from very early times. The fire-altar reappeared on the coinage; and with the renaissance of the old literature of Mazdeism

[1] Haug: *Essay on Pehlevî*, p. 145.

came also numerous sects, born of the complex civilization of the empire, — the confluence of Semitic, Greek, Syrian, Christian, and Persian traditions, though it is certain that neither Greek nor Christian influences are traceable in any important respect in the native literature.[1] Partly as a result of the renewed energy of Mazdeism, and partly as an effort to protect it against foreign religions, arose the remarkable literature to which I have alluded, only less interesting than that recovery and reproduction of the older Avesta which we owe in part to the same great epoch. It was composed in Pehlevî,[2] the Semitically written language of the period, largely constituted indeed of Iranian words and construction, but containing also a large Semitic element which was employed ideogrammatically, and read in the corresponding Iranian.[3] And this linguistic vehicle lasted till the substitution of the modern Persian alphabet, when the "Huzvâresh" reading, as it was called, disappeared with the words to which it had been applied. The oldest specimens of Pehlevî script are found on the earliest monuments of the Sassanian kings.[4] This rejuvenescence of the faith blossomed into translations of the Avesta, and into doctrinal, mythical, and ritualistic writings the amount of which cannot be estimated. Haug has already given an enumeration and brief analysis of fifty works, aggregating no less than five hundred and seventeen thousand words,[5] all in the interest of the Zoroastrian revival, and indicating a very complete sense of sufficiency to the demands of national life and faith. The energy with which this abundant supply of creed, tradition, and institution came to the surface,

[1] Haug: *Essays on Pehlevî*, p. 130.

[2] The word formerly designated ancient Persian in all its forms, being originally an ethnic or geographical rather than linguistic designation, and transferred from the people and country (probably of the *Parthians*) to their national tongue, whatever that might be.

[3] It is Haug's belief that the Avesta itself had long existed in this language. *Essay on Pehlevî*, p. 143.

[4] Third century, A. D.

[5] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 113.

after so long a period of political suppression, is evidence of great vitality, as well as grasp on the existing elements of future civilization. In fact, the substance of this religion, as already shown, — the worship of the personal will, as incarnated in the struggle of good with evil for the mastery of the universe, — was inevitably the nucleus of future religious development. It could not be escaped; it was indispensable to all existing forms of religious and social aspirations; and although a flood of physical force swept its special name and organization almost out of being, its soul passed into Mahometanism, Judaism, and Christianity, to mould these new accessions to the same essential purpose.

Whatever signs of borrowing from these systems may appear in the Pehlevî literature of Mazdeism are delusive, so far as this modern religion is concerned. In the vitality of personal and ethical will-worship, Mazdeism was the precursor, the herald, of their glory, and its influence on their development was of the most decisive and enduring character.

The Pehlevî literature of the Mazdeans was not born in a day. It represented a smouldering life under the ashes of their desolation, from the days of Alexander to the days of Ardeshîr Bâbegân. The origin of most of these writings is obscure, falling either in the Parthian period, while the faith was still under a cloud, or during the Sassanian revival, when the whole glorious past reappeared with a new inspiration, which was to glow yet again through the heroic epos of the Mahometan Firdûsî. Their character is, to judge from the typical works now accessible to the Western scholar, what might be expected from the commingling of Greek, Syrian, Christian, Persian, and we must not forget to add Chaldean, civilizations in the current of that age; but all are intensely Mazdean in their spirit. A portion is analogous to the historical and prophetic

Judaism of the restoration under Cyrus, detailing the progress and sufferings of the national faith, quarrying its old traditions, and predicting its triumph. Some are controversial, indicating the large toleration enforced on it by the time, by careful confutation of other religious systems. Some are manuals in the form of conversation or instruction by its sages; some regulative of its ritual; others explore its visionary world of future reward and punishment, — like the "Ardâi-Vîrâf-Nâmeh," which seems to stand in close connection with the early Christian "Ascension of Isaiah." The Mînôkhired, "Spirit of Wisdom," sums up its whole philosophy, ethics, and mythology, in the light of a metaphysical speculation foreign to the original religion, and contrasts it with other systems as the inventions of Ahriman.

Of the highest repute is the Bundehesh, a cosmogonical account of the original creation, providential history, and final purification of the world; combining the mythology of the great war of Ormuzd and Ahriman with the geography, astronomy, and natural history of the Pârsîs; marked by signs of compilation from fragments of very different ages as well as religions, — some of them of considerable antiquity,[1] and some representing or completing the old Avestan faith by data, especially astronomical, derived from the Arabs, and in some respects correcting it, — evidently interpolations, later than the Mahometan conquest.[2] Especially important has been, according to some, the influence of Judaism.[3] But the points of mythological difference from the old Avesta, such as the story of the first human couple, with their temptation and fall,

[1] Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 48.

[2] Justi, the latest translator, puts it in or after the time of Firdûsî, tenth century, even as late as the thirteenth century. Justi relies upon these interpolations to prove very late origin.

[3] Carré: *L'Ancien Orient.*, ii. 390. Nicolas: *Doct. Rel. des Juifs*, p. 300; *Revue Germanique*, Sept. 1858, pp. 467, 468, quoted in the same.

and that of the successive periods of creation; the complicated eschatology of a destruction and regeneration of the world through fire; the doctrine of several messianic persons to appear at the latter day, and that of the unity of the first principle as *Zrvan-akarana*, which is still far from emphatic, since the dual powers of Ormuzd and Ahriman still create the world between them, — these differences are in fact natural developments of the older religion of the Gâthâs and the Yashts, when brought into close relations with the still older civilization of Chaldea, to which the analogous Jewish doctrines and legends are themselves, as we have seen, largely traceable. The resemblances to later Judaism point back to a common stock of Babylonian traditions; while those which connect Mazdeism with earlier Hebrew religion, — such as the division of creatures into clean and unclean, rules of purification and laws relating to the civil treatment of diseases, much more striking than the later analogies just referred to, — are still further removed from the probability of a Hebrew origin. The Pehlevî literature shows little of the spiritualizing tendency of that school of Judaism which had most influence in the East, — the Alexandrian allegorical school of Philo. Although Neoplatonic elements from the Greek school of Edessa are believed to be discernible in the Mînôkhired, the strongly pronounced religious dualism of good and evil principles, unknown to Judaism, is maintained in Mazdeism to the last. The saviours of the Bundehesh have slight analogy with the exclusive messianic ideas of the Jews. The Mazdean doctrine of the resurrection of the body is much older than the Jewish, which first appears in the Maccabean persecutions as a result of the national sufferings and the messianic hope expressed in the Book of Daniel.[1] Plutarch has a quotation which proves its existence in Persia in the time of

[1] See M. Nicolas: *Doct. Rel. des Juifs*, pp. 343-377.

Alexander, two centuries previous.[1] The Jewish bodily resurrection, moreover, differed from the Persian in being confined to the righteous; and had probably no other connection with it than that of being suggested, in a general form, by its superiority, as a consolation and promise, to the traditional Semitic belief in an unsubstantial *Sheôl* as the destiny of the soul. Nor had the Jewish doctrine of resurrection of that period any resemblance to the Persian faith in final salvation or conversion of the wicked, and the entire abolition of evil desire. The Mazdean angelology, so far from being borrowed from the Jews, furnished the basis of their seven princes of the angels, and of their celestial legions of guardian spirits; while its demonology gave them their later or malignant Satan and his diabolic legions possessing human bodies and souls.

[1] *De Isis et Osiris*, § 47, from *Theopompus*. See chapter on "Dualism of the Avesta."

V.

CUNEIFORM MONUMENTS OF THE ACCADIAN AND THE ASSYRIAN.

CUNEIFORM MONUMENTS OF THE ACCADIAN AND THE ASSYRIAN.

IT is the excellence of the physical sciences in this age of their dominion, that every step of their progress requires the continued acceptance of whatever it involves as its historical antecedents. The conditioning laws are there and here and everywhere, and not one can be ignored, since their constant process alone supplies the materials for further investigation and discovery. The materialist cannot get far enough, fumbling in his plasms and solutions by primeval details. But in the treatment of mental evolution there is still a tendency to repudiate, or at least to pass by, many earlier stages and conditions which more palpable and current interests are supposed to have made obsolete. Thus the convenience of uniformity in spelling affords excuses for a phonetic reconstruction which sweeps away the anatomy of language as useless, and utterly discards linguistic evolution. So in national history, the revolutionary passion of the Celt (a periodic access of Nihilism), which in a republic is very infectious, overrides all historical obligations and their resultant conditions, perpetually reconstructing society out of the excitements of the hour. So also we have found a Celtic contempt of historic forces and necessities in much of what is called "free religious thought," as well as in Christianity. In fact, it has been in one way or another traditionally fashionable to think of the beginnings of ideas and institutions as having only quantitative or statistical relations to their actual living results; and to count it labor well-nigh wasted

even to recover the buried witnesses, that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs." This is simply to construct history without philosophy.

But Nature has always her penalty for such loose utilitarian method. She tolerates no dropping of threads, no contempt for the careful steps which have cost her so much time and pains. When the phonetic reformer sweeps away the apparent grotesqueness of our traditional spelling, he is sacrificing also the graces of patient development; he barters away the *morale* of linguistic art; he forsakes the embodied laws of structure to gratify the caprices of a perverted pronunciation which has already set aside these, one and all. Social reconstructions *de novo* simply disorganize the elements they seek to destroy. Contempt for the "dead past," conceit of the creed that now is master, deprives living thought of universality, of sentiment, of ideal elevation, and makes a science of historical evolution impossible, starving that sense of invisible forces and uncalculated values which is the noblest educator of man.

We are products of the past as well as of the present; we are inherited fuel as well as instant fire; creatures of tradition as well as of inspiration. For all inspiration springs from resultant conditions, — as the plant is rooted in soil and climate, in geologic layer, and continental form. This must have the largest interpretation in matters of the spirit.

For it is not a fragment of the past to which we are indebted; not a person, a tribe, an epoch, or a religion. We mutilate our faculties when we base science, philosophy, or faith upon anything less than the whole process of human growth. In mind, as in matter, no forces are lost, though names pass and forms are changed. And so we may trust Nature to keep us in mind of this, ever to stir the flagging interest in the long forgotten, and prove

her dynamic atoms inexhaustible and undying. Her silent mounds cover whole arsenals of invigoration and noble surprise. In her dead bones she hides a prophetic quickening for all coming time. "Let the dead bury their dead" covers but half the truth. It is when a forgotten thought or deed rises in new and unexpected power that the soul of the living is stirred. Then the Universal proves its immortality even by what seemed to have had its day; the narrow present becomes transcendental, and expands beyond experience itself. Surprise and awe make us poetic and creative; we reconstruct old beliefs, and repair old defects. When Birs-Nimrud breaks the silence of his centuries, and Egypt speaks from her tombs, then for science, for history, for poetry, for theology, for all that Nature means, from the East even to the West the light shines that rounds the thought of man and completes the chain of his faith. Let the scholar magnify his function amidst the arrogant competitions and foolishly exclusive categories of the moment, as he rolls the stones from sepulchres that seemed to have buried forever the earlier witnesses of the spirit of man. He also is reformer, builder of the hearts and homes of ages.

Our real knowledge, according to Plato, is "reminiscence." And surely our discovery itself is but recognition. Our enthusiasm and wonder at every new thought is in finding it already familiar, of our own race and experience; in feeling at home in it, as in glad recovery of what had been lost. What is the charm of history but that the whispers of one's own genius have come back to him, as with oceanic roll, from the deeps of humanity? A mystery of multiplied personality! By these delicious surprises of recognition, our own dead past becomes a living light to our feet. Is it then strange that the revival of a whole buried civilization should recast the whole thought of the time? It is the stern reticence of Nature

that stimulates scientific ardor to victory. So the uncomprehended monuments of remote ages are closed lips quivering with secrets whence all living thought awaits the solution of its problems. The law that "nothing is lost" becomes an inspiration. A nation, a religion, a civilization which has run its course and died in its due time, because it had no more to do or say but to be the soil of new, higher growth, has a nobler second-life of uses before unsuspected; because the time has come for that help to universal man which it held in reserve that latest generations may learn, to their admonition, what they had failed to allow it. The Arab in his tent under the Babel-mound muses in awe on the genii and the giants that dwelt on earth and raised the heaven-scaling pile. But what is his dream to the magnificent piles which science has evoked from this rubbish of ages, covered with records that correct our religious traditions, — their very decipherment a miracle of toil, and an epic triumph of thought!

Say what our self-complacent Sum of all ages may, the education of the human race does *not* detach it from its infancy. The larger its culture, the surer its track leads to the hidden springs of origin, — to those first lessons which contain guarantees of its best. After dark ages of despotism, superstition, suppression are past, comes wider diffusion than ever of the thirst to read the buried history of man. What universal interest in the runes and hieroglyphs, in the languages of forgotten tribes, in survivals of earliest life, in the real age and structure of the Bibles of races and the origins of beliefs, — in the disentombment of Troy, of Cyprus, of Mycenæ! It is not simply parallel to the passionate press of physical science towards primitive forms of life; that first impression of universal law is intensified by this morning in the history of *mind;* this first mountain-top in the wilderness of man's exodus from the dark,— inextinguishable torch-bearer even there; this

flash of magnesium light on the secrets of human history; Aladdin's castle, realm of dwarfs and volcanic laboratory illumined at the touch of a culture to whose perfection the whole past has wrought as one man. The dust-garments unrolled, the figured fragments rise as ideograph and cuneiform; they break their long silence with far-off poetic report of man's dealing with fate and freedom, that shall live when the lenses and reagents that now construct our physical science shall have given place to new; just as the pen, itself more potent than the sword of past ages, has here given way as revealer of knowledge to the mightier spade.

In these resurrections that attest the conservation of historical forces, that human energy which has broken the spells of Nature is not so wonderful or startling as the apparently human sympathy of Nature's responses to its call. The hint is always forthcoming to further them; the witchhazel bends in the explorer's hand above the element he needs. Key leads on to key, till the subtlest combination-lock yields, and the magic of science proves far more at home in the field of interpretation than did the old claim of miracle to eminent domain over all secrets and all obstacles. The true Sphinx's lips are ever half open; her eyes expect discovery; for her secret is nothing else than the seeker himself.

The story of a vast civilization, which has since been not extravagantly called the key of human history, recorded with a careful divination, it might almost seem, of its future uses, on the palaces and rocks of Mesopotamia, and even on the gigantic-winged creatures that guarded them, in a mosaic setting of terra-cotta and alabaster, lay buried under the dust of two thousand years. The complicated letters of the record, though combined out of a single elementary form, the wedge, as Babylon out of her tiers of brick, had so perished from memory that this mere

wedge-mark of the chisel in the damp clay was imagined to be an arrow-head, holding some subtile meaning, — a national emblem, or even a symbol of the Christian Trinity! At the opening of the present century, Babylon and Nineveh were still "heaps;" here and there a fragment gave hints to thoughtful travellers, — Niebuhr, De Sacy, and others, — that these lines must read from left to right; that the single wedge meant division of words; that the series most frequently occurring was probably of the same meaning with a haughty formula of self-assertion already familiar in the records of Sassanian kings. "King of Kings" as a heading was the earliest of conjectures by Grotefend. Note, it was the phraseology of *personal will and worship* that first leaped into significance before the explorers of these monuments raised by the same all-mastering element of religion in the beginning of its career.

The royal inscriptions of Persepolis were in fact the starting point of discovery; letter by letter the holy name of Ahuramazda was spelled out, and the path of discovery opened with the alphabet of Persian cuneiform. When Grotefend read, at Göttingen, in 1802, the earliest academic essay on this form of writing, on the same occasion with Heyne's description of the first discovery in hieroglyphics,[1] the Zend scholarship of Lassen was opportunely at hand to correct those first results. First came the dim suspicion of Rich, 1820, that the huge mounds which he saw from the shores of Bagdad were the ruins of Nineveh. Then Botta struck the spade into Khorsabad hills, and, behold! a palace burst into view, with its royal legend in arrow-head type, "Sargon, the mighty King of Assyria's land." Then, at the touch of Layard, afterwards of Loftus, the ancient Calah rose from the oldest of Assyrian tombs, from the giant heaps of Nimrud; and then Nineveh her-

[1] Mahaffy: *Prolegomena to Ancient History*, p. 175 *et seq.*

self, palace after palace, with the record of her kings Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, Asshur-bani-pal, — the art and science and religion of races, doubling the realm of history and reconstructing it by their resurrection. Then came the French to fix the site of Babylon, to open up the great Bel-Temple of Birs-Nimrud and the matchless glories of Nebuchadnezzar's art, and restore in full figure the old palaces of the ancient kings. Rawlinson, Lenormant, Smith, and the interpreters followed; and the mightiest achievement of modern discovery, the decipherment of the cuneiform, was made possible by these inexhaustible materials which have been busying the ardent brains of thousands of scholars throughout the civilized world for the last thirty years. It is no part of my present task to follow the track of these preliminary explorations. It is the significance of the cuneiform, past and to come, as a factor in universal religion, as we have explained that term, which confines our present attention.

In half a century the trilingual Behistun inscription, transcribed and translated by Rawlinson, aided by the rocks of Susa and Van, was serving a purpose as important as that rendered in Egyptian studies by the Rosetta stone. Grotefend had divined that the second and third columns were translations of the first, or Persian: the second, that of the non-Aryan Medes, had been referred by Westergaard and Norris, and more fully by Oppert, to the Turanian family of languages;[1] and Layard and Botta had given data for showing the third to be Assyrian. The phonetics of these two had been found, not to be alphabetic like the Persian, but syllabic, and to be mixed in a confusing way with ideographs or pure picture-signs; and the complication was further increased by Rawlinson's discovery that the same signs

[1] Altaic, according to Oppert, or Casdo-Scythic, belonging to the non-Aryan portion of the population of Media. Oppert: *Le Peuple et Langue des Medes* (1879), pp. 7, 8.

were not only used, now in the one way, and now in the other, but that they had ever varying phonetic values.[1] Then this difficulty was in part removed by the appearance of numerous versions of the same proper names and ideas on different tablets;[2] and still further by the discovery of lists of syllabaries from the wonderful library of King Asshur-bani-pal, seventh century before Christ, opened up by Layard in the Nineveh palace in 1850. George Smith's account of his prodigious labors in gathering into connected form the Chaldean literature on these tablets of Nineveh, is wonderfully suggestive of the sympathy of Nature with the aspirations of the human mind. Asshur-bani-pal, the old world-conqueror, is moved to gather carefully, to arrange and entitle the records of a past civilization on library shelves. What cares Nature for his pains? Dust gathers over him and his palaces. Nineveh is a buried dream. No miracle preserves these old bits of clay, or their forgotten characters marked with chisels three thousand years ago. Geological and chemical laws cared no more for them than for the sweepings of his stables. They had gone their way well on towards the dissolution that awaits all forms, when, lo! the mind of man remembers them, and comes back to claim its own. The restorers are not daunted, for the light and liberty that prove humanity the sovereign of Nature, the crown of her laws and ends, inspire them; and out of the very shreds and patches of ruin, the old race, its genius, its functions, its bearing on most religions as their cradle and teacher are all revealed, passing into school books and common speech. Here were at least ten thousand clay tablets, — the collated law, grammar, history, science, lexicography, mythology of fifteen hundred years, preserved for twenty centuries more, to solve these hard

[1] Hincks: *The Polyphony of the Assyrio-Babylonian Cuneiform.*
[2] Schrader: *Keilinschriften und Gesch.*, p. 41.

problems of interpretation: fragments broken by fire and by falling ruins, and by searchers for treasure, into bits innumerable, mutilated, scattered, infiltrated with water, choked with crystals; yet waiting their hour, in the course of historic evolution, to reconstruct piecemeal a buried world of literature and religion, and to serve modern liberty of thought by bringing the supernaturalist's Bible of Christianity into the natural chain of historic cause and effect. How those Assyrian world-masters worked in their proud self-assertion to ends they did not know, when they strove so patiently to preserve their work by fixing the tablets into walls with the written side turned inward; by repeating the inscription on an outer coating of the tablet;[1] by accumulating copies; by grammatical and verbal lists to assist the reading of forms of speech even then becoming extinct; by versions of important documents in all the principal languages of the empire; by penalties invoked at the close of every record on any future destroyer or alterer of their purport, first makers of an infallible Bible text; by the permanent nature of the wedge marks, still legible, after the wear of ages, by the shadows they cast,[2]—"*Non omnino moriamur*"! That vast library was no word of Jahvistic Bible revelation in the Hebrew tongue. "Palace of Asshur-bani-pal, king of the world, to whom Nebo and Tasmit [god and goddess of science] have given ears to hear and eyes to see the virtues." No miracle has protected these frail tablets of clay, symbols of mortality; every natural law of decay has done with them after its kind; yet enough remains when at last the patient restorers of Babel have come to her "heaps," to refute the tale of Jahveh's curse, and to make the dead dust a living soul. The palpable encroachment of desert and flood upon a narrow strip of

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. p. 68.

[2] Loftus: *Chaldæa and Susiana*, p. 150.

cultured plain could easily suggest to Isaiah the way in which Babylon might become "heaps;" but what prophet had predicted this her resurrection?

Then came the fruitful competitions of interpreters, — Lassen, Burnouf, Rawlinson, Hincks,[1] — and the splendid track of verification which has established the substantial correctness of their method.[2] The Semitic character of the Assyrian records, and the true pronunciation of divine names, was apparent from the syllabaries; the names of kings were more or less verified by Hebrew and other writings. A far greater amount of resource than had sufficed for Egyptological studies came rapidly to hand. In 1857 Rawlinson, Hincks, Talbot, and Oppert made four independent versions of seven hundred lines;[3] and they were so similar to each other that the validity of the general method was beyond dispute.[4] However dubious

[1] Grotefend's discovery of the names of three kings and a Persepolis alphabet in 1802 was so far in advance of a time when Tychsen and Münter and others failed to decipher these monuments, that it was thirty-two years before these discoveries "could be resolved or tested." Mohl's *Vingt-sept ans d'histoire des études orientales*, i. 547.

The first researches which threw real light on the cuneiform inscriptions were not those of Layard and Rawlinson, but those of Schultz, copies of the Van inscriptions, whose papers were saved by Mohl, and urged upon the French government in a valuable report, 1840. Grotefend had proved that the Persepolis tablets contained a language of vowels and consonants, making names and titles of Darius and Xerxes; and then, 1836, came Burnouf's and Lassen's memoirs on Niebuhr's and Schultz's copies. Rawlinson had but one letter to discover. (Müller's Preface to Mohl's *Vingt-sept ans d' histoire des études orientales*, p. xx.). Mohl stirred up students and explorers, — Botta and others, — to study the three cuneiform alphabets, and also Colonel Rawlinson, who possessed the one copy of the Behistun trilingual (xxiv.). But Rawlinson held back. Then Flandin and Coste published their inscriptions, 1844. Botta's immense spoils of Khorsabad were sent to Paris, 1845. Then Layard's work, stimulated by Botta's, began, 1846. Rawlinson's translation of the Behistun appeared in 1847. When Rawlinson sent the copies to London, Norris, the Secretary of the London Society, "could detect the faults of writing in the copies with the same certainty that a Latinist could correct the faults of a Latin inscription" (xxviii.). Layard prosecuted his magnificent researches at Koyunjik, published 1851; then at Babylon.

"Cuneiform writing had probably been invented at Babylon, transported thence to Nineveh, and applied to the Assyrian tongue; then later carried to Ecbatana, and applied to the Median tongue; and finally adapted to the Persian at Persepolis." Mohl's *Vingt-sept ans d' histoire des études orientales*, i. p. 178. It gradually became simplified, till at Persepolis it was alphabetical.

[2] Ménant: *Eléments d'épigraphie assyrienne.*

[3] *Report of Oriental International Congress*, 1873, Tom. ii. p. 126.

[4] Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, June, 1874.

many passages are still confessed to remain, every day reveals some new and positive feature of Assyrian and Babylonian history; the original texts are translated for the common reader in Europe and America, and their testimony is transforming the Bible into secular teaching even for Sunday-schools.[1]

The early death of George Smith left his translation of the Babylonian Genesis-legend and mythical epopee a mere collection of fragments, pieced together with unverified conjectures; but fresh copies and surer readings are fast supplying what was wanting in this and other records; the indefatigable industry of Ménant, and the productive genius of François Lenormant, are seconded by the numerous collaborateurs of the Society of Biblical Archæology. Oppert, Schrader, Ménant, and Sayce are bringing Assyrian grammar into the line of exact science; and as the many tracks of a great inquiry are sure to converge in some adequate mind, so in the interpretation of cuneiform literature, the first creative day has come to its fulness in Eberhard Schrader.[2] The confession by this eminent Assyriologist of the many sources of error to which cuneiform decipherment is still subject, gives great value to his positive claims in behalf of its results.[3] Two extremely important conclusions may be considered assured by his careful studies. The first is the presence in the Assyrian column of the inscriptions, of a third form of Semitic speech besides those already known as the Western and Southern forms. The second is the fact that the number of passages in these inscriptions in any material manner confirmatory of the Biblical records is very small indeed, in view of the vast amount of material

[1] The English version, as given in the *Records of the Past*, is recognized as on the whole being the most literal and having least openings for inevitable diversities and readings. Delattre: *Inscriptions Historiques de Ninive et de Babylone*, p. 56.

[2] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxiii., xxvi.

[3] Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, 1878.

now opened; while the unreliableness of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, especially in matters of chronology, is indicated by contradictions almost equal in number to the confirmations. This scholar admirably says: "A thousand times better that a manifest incongruity between the Bible and the inscriptions should be admitted, than that it should be forcibly concealed either by twisting the Bible or breaking down the monumental records." [1]

That what was previously known from the Bible and other sources of the geography of Palestine, as well as that of the neighboring countries, even to Arabia and Egypt, should receive ample confirmation from the inscriptions, is no more than was to have been expected.[2] Other matters of conspicuous interest, such as the subjection of Israel to Assyria, hardly needed such confirmation. On the other hand, the few references in these inscriptions to the relations between Hebrew and Assyrian kings contain many probably irreconcilable differences from the Bible story. The Assyrian chronology, as contained in the "eponymous lists," — of which there are many independent and parallel forms, and which are not only in agreement with each other, but absolutely confirmed by a very credible witness, the so-called Canon of Ptolemy, — for the space of two hundred and twenty-eight years, is in so strong opposition to the Bible that harmonists have been driven to the desperate expedients of doubling names in the lists, and imagining breaks extending over nearly fifty years, at the very epoch when such a violent proceeding was least permissible.[3] For, unfortunately, the chief differences between the Biblical and the cuneiform annals come precisely where the latter are most thoroughly fortified by the above-mentioned Canon; namely, in the times

[1] Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch*, p. 93.
[2] Ibid., pp. 87, 90.
[3] Ibid., pp. 300-304.

of Sargon and Sennacherib, where the variance amounts to thirteen years.[1] Hebrew kings[2] whom the inscriptions show to have belonged to the time of Tiglath-pileser (745–727 B.C.), are placed by the Bible previous to his reign, and made contemporary with an Assyrian king Phul, whose name is not to be found on the monuments, and is irreconcilable with the "eponymous lists," leading to the most arbitrary constructions of the history of Nineveh by distinguished Assyriologists.[3] To complicate the difficulties, the Book of Chronicles ascribes to Phul what belongs to Tiglath-pileser.[4] There are obstacles in the way of identifying the cuneiform *Aḥabbu* with the Hebrew Ahab.[5] Equally illustrative is the attempt to identify the *Belshazzar* of Daniel with the *Nabonidus* of the cuneiform and of history, recorded as the king of Babylon at the time of its capture by Cyrus. This has been done by supposing that Nabonidus had a son named Belshazzar, who, "as he seems to be commander-in-chief of the army[?], probably had greater influence than his father, and so was represented as king." Though no such name as Belshazzar is to be found in the tablet, "it is evidently he who is meant by the king's son with the army in Accad."[6] Yet the allusion to the king's son, and to other officers and soldiers, is of the most incidental character.

[1] Schrader; *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 344.

[2] Menahem and Pekah. So Azariah and Ahaz.

[3] Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 347. Also Delattre: *Inscriptions Historiques*, pp. 64, 69.

[4] Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 437, 441.

[5] Ibid., pp. 356–371.

[6] The differences in translations are most obvious in the readings of ideogrammes which represent proper names, and may have one or another force. Thus the same God is rendered by Rawlinson *Vul;* by Ménant, *Bin;* and by Sayce and Schrader, *Rimmon. Izdubar* is a name given by Smith, provisionally, for a Sun-hero whose real name has not yet been learned. But there is equal difference about the meaning of the names of metals found in the inscriptions, which is natural enough, since the same is true of the metals and precious stones mentioned in the Bible and on the Egyptian monuments. So with wild beasts in the records of royal hunts, in which different translators render the same word by buffaloes, elephants, and emir, rhinoceros, and wild boars. See various translations of Tiglath-pileser I. Also Delattre: *Inscriptions Historiques*, pp. 38, 60.

What would be of most importance for the Bible apologists is some confirmation, direct or indirect, of the miraculous dealings with which the thread of Old Testament history is so thickly hung; but of this there is not a shadow. The frantic endeavors of the harmonists to make out of the few natural points of connection between the Old Testament and the Babylonian and Assyrian records what they call "confirmations of the Sacred Scriptures," consist in forcing the parallelism by wild conjectures in order to deduce a wholly unwarranted conclusion; namely, that the record of the Bible, especially the Genesis story, is historically true. It is further necessary to assume, with Rawlinson and Geikie, that the Hebrew only has the original revelation, which the Chaldee has perverted. The confusion here is palpable; the agreement, were it one and much greater, would only prove the antiquity of the myth among Semitic and probably other nations, but by no means afford additional argument in favor of a historic basis, especially against the researches of science. Yet this is the current logic of the harmonizing apologists.

A still more perilous crack in the system is the persistent forgetfulness or repudiation of the fact that the superiority of the Hebrew Bible over every other Scripture of the world, which is the objective point of their studies, cannot be proved by the imperfections of the world Scriptures as known to us at present. Thus Geikie, in his exaltation of the Bible above the inscriptions of Egypt and Babylon, because it was concerned "with the cry of the oppressed peoples" and the divine moral law while they were busy with the self-glorification of cruel kings, though true to a considerable extent, omits to recognize that the literature, religious and secular, of the ancient world has been mainly destroyed by Christian fanaticism and neglect, except such references and quotations in writers like

Eusebius and Porphyry and others for polemic purposes, as serve but to assure us of their vast dimensions and to us unsearchable contents.

The ethnic genealogy of Genesis gets no new indorsement, and the names which have puzzled ethnologists in its Noachic lines are as dark as ever. The monuments have nothing to say of Cushites or Hamites, whose very names were, it would now seem, unknown in the lands of Nimrod and of Mizraim, and were obviously chosen for geographical convenience, or to convey those temporary tribal antipathies upon which Hebrew ethnology was so largely erected. Nimrod is unknown to the monuments, spite of the theory that he is to be found in the mythic Merodach, and of George Rawlinson's insistence, upon Biblical authority, on his historical character, and Smith's pointless conjecture that he is the same with the Izdubar of the Chaldean epic, because he was a "mighty hunter" (as were all the Assyrian kings) and is located in Erech, one of "Nimrod's cities."[1] The best authorities have drawn from the tablets a mythical solution of the name, as that of the Babylonian god Merodach, conceived as an epic hero,[2] of whose title Nimrod is the Hebraized form.

Again, the Chaldeans, — that intangible people, whose haziness is well illustrated by the fact that they are mentioned in the Bible sometimes as colonists,[3] sometimes as priests and official soothsayers,[4] and sometimes as a conquering tribe from the North,[5] — are equally unknown to the monuments till the ninth century before Christ. Within a century they became masters of Babylon, — great conquerors, laying the foundation for the over-

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 118. Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 166.

[2] Lenormant: *Le Deluge*, p. 10. Grivel (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.* Vol. iii., part i. p. 140). Sayce (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.* Vol. ii., part i. p. 1).

[3] Genesis xi. 31: xv. 7.

[4] Daniel ii. iv. 7; v. 7–11.

[5] Jeremiah x. 22. Habakkuk 1–6.

throw of Assyria by aid of the Medes.[1] One thinks them Egyptians, who brought arts and letters to the Babylonian Semites; another makes them Cushites, who retained in their language the science and literature of Semitic races, with the specialty of a learned class;[2] another believes them Aryans.[3] But the cuneiform tablets seem to settle the question by describing the Chaldeans as a tribe of Accadians, with which race they were probably synonymous from the beginning; in classical and Biblical antiquity figuring as a learned and priestly class.[4] But who were the Accadians? This leads us to the most interesting historical results of cuneiform studies.

It seems to be from the lack of other definite sources of information that most modern scholars accept the very uncertain authority of Berosus, the Babylonian historian of Alexander's time, as to the succession of dynasties which succeeded his monstrous epoch of prehistoric kings, four hundred thousand years in duration, — his Elamite or Median dynasty, beginning twenty-two hundred years before Christ, being one of the most recent. The Greek legends of Nin and Semiramis have still less interest.

The primitive civilization of the Mesopotamian basin was not Semitic, but Turanian or Ugro-Finnic. This is now recognized by the best scholars, — by Oppert, Sayce, Lenormant, and Schrader.[5] A race, whose language is agglutinative, allied to the Finnic, Tartar, Etruscan, it may be, — at all events to the Mongolian family, — brought the earliest cuneiform writing to this region,[6] composed its earliest annals, developed a system of magic out of which

[1] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic* (Eng. ed.), pp. 339, 340.

[2] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. chap. iii. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, — Article "Chaldeans."

[3] Renan: *Semitique Langage*, i. 67.

[4] Lenormant: *Essai . . . des Fragments Cosmogoniques de Bérose*, pp. 52-53.

[5] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 55; Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic* (Eng ed.), p. 352; Schrader (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxix. 49).

[6] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 359.

came the ascendency of the Chaldees, and laid the foundations of its mythology.[1] The Accadians seem to have descended from Elam, bringing with them the picture-writing from which the cuneiform was developed. Not Semitic, as the Genesis table represents them, the Elamite tribes spoke Turanian dialects, and derived the name Elam from the Accadian *Numma* (Highlands), translated into Semitic. They were from earliest times continually invading Babylonia, where they established dynasties, — 2280–1270 B.C. Even down to the sixth century there were wars between the two nations. From these tribes came the astronomy of the Semites, who located the zenith over Elam. Assyrian art also came from them.

On this race, who call themselves mountaineers (*Accadai*), arose that largely Semitic-Assyrian civilization, localized more especially in Nineveh, and known to us already through its connection with the Hebrews and the more or less mythical traditions of the Greeks. Whether the Turanian-Accadians were preceded by a "Cephenian" race of Hamitic affinities, from Egypt or elsewhere, spread all over Eastern Asia, and designated in the Bible as Cushites; and whether, as Lenormant supposes, these Cushites of Ethiopia, in its widest extent, placed in Genesis among the children of Ham, were really the oldest branch of the Semitic family, and thus serve to explain the origin of that Semitic influence in Babylonia which speedily supplanted the Turanian exotics; or whether a still earlier black race was found in the country by these Hamitic Semites, by coalescence with which they lost many Semitic traits, but preserved and transmitted Semitic speech,[2] — are questions of conjecture on which the monuments as yet throw no adequate light. The admixture of Semite and Mongol is, however, distinctly marked in the

[1] Sayce in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, — "Babylonia."
[2] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 343, 345.

monumental records, even in the Babylonian sculptures, which are believed by Hamy to show these two ethnic types. Recent Etruscan researches have revealed a type similar to that which is here believed to be Mongolian, lending plausibility to Taylor's theory of the Mongolian origin of the Etruscans.

Cuneiform script proved as susceptible of modification to meet the requirements of Western Asiatic civilization as the Semitic alphabet has to serve the same purpose for European. Its ingeniously varied combinations represented the sounds of the most differing tongues, — of Turanian languages like the Susian, Median, and Chaldean; of Semitic, like the Assyrian; of Indo-European, like the Armenian and the Persian. Like the Chinese, which has been of equal competency for the East of Asia, it was originally composed of ideographic or picture signs, as is proved by an inscription of this kind at Susa, and by the possibility of tracing the process of development, through phases similar to those of Egyptian and Chinese systems, from the pure picture-sign to the largely phonetic.[1]

Not less remarkable has been the expansive force of this Mongoloid family, as represented in the East of Asia by the wide extension of the Chinese and of their civilization, and in the West by the immense deposit of tribes speaking dialects of the Altaic or Turanian type, covering ancient Elam,[2] Chaldea,[3] Parthia,[4] and Media;[5] and if the "Scythians" of Justin were of the same family, as he believed and as is probable enough, holding possession of the most of Asia for fifteen hundred years.

These analogies are of very great interest in the study

[1] Lenormant: *Manual of Ancient History of the East*, i. 434.
[2] This is shown by the Susian inscriptions.
[3] Accad or Sumir.
[4] Ctesias says the Parthians were Scythians.
[5] This has been fully shown by Oppert.

of a family of nations which has played a much larger part in the history of human progress than was even suspected till within the last quarter of a century. But this is not all. The fact that the two great systems of writing in which the chief civilizations of Eastern and Western Asia have found their record, — the Chinese ideographic and the Babylonian cuneiform, — were Turanian achievements, is of even more striking significance. From that ethnic family, which has been regarded as the most materialistic and most devoted to transient and trivial matters, has proceeded a twofold immortality. The ideograph has been developed into the enduring literary medium of a vast living civilization; the cuneiform has been the equally enduring monumental record of a departed one. The ideograph has been the ever-changing ideal of a thoroughly concrete and seemingly unprogressive family; the cuneiform speedily crystallized into a changeless expression of the most ardent and passionate of races, the herald of progress in the Oriental world. One only almost reached the alphabetic stage of writing; but both show that ethics, science, literature, mythology, and religion could seize a comparatively rudimentary form of the art, and fill its child-like picture-moulds with their universal meanings; that intuition and faith found expression in these, long before the slow processes of analytic study out of which creeds and alphabets alike proceed. Both are wonders of the constructive power of mind in early civilization; striking instances of its evolutionary movement, which can be traced back in each to the primitive picture-sign, the language of creative imagination in its germ. They thus bear witness to the continuity of ideal purpose down the course of history. All alphabetic signs, the perfected organ of human speech, were gradually shaped from materials analogous to the picture-sign of these Mongoloid races, who, without aid from Aryan or Semitic,

have brought the picture-sign up to a high point of development, giving it great capability of expression, as well as adaptability to the needs of different races. The Chinese found it competent to express more and more of their concrete detail-experience by an endless intricacy of strokes and figures. The Assyrians and Persians found it equally capable of ideal uses, conveyed successfully through endless combinations of a single constructive element, the graphic wedge. Through the strictness of its laws of structure, as positive in their use of the Chinese pencil stroke and the Babylonian wedge as the laws of architecture in their use of arch and buttress and scroll, came the possibility of a change of material from mere images into phonetic and syllabic signs, at the demand of sound for free representation as script; and the more perfect analysis of sound evolves from these the alphabet as the prime organ of human culture. From the Chinese signs have come several transitory alphabets of Asia, as well as the more permanent alphabet of Japan. And it seems probable, from recent researches as well as from the myth which traces letters to Babylon, that the Phœnician letters, whence the archaic Greek, and through them the present European, were derived from cuneiform originals.[1] Deecke, aided by Schrader and others, has traced them to modified forms of Assyrian cursive, in the ninth century before Christ, and undertakes to show the original names of many of the Hebrew letters in the Assyrian language.[2]

Cuneiform writing, then, carried the monumental literature of three great linguistic families, — the Turanian, the Semitic, the Aryan; the first represented by the Accadians,

[1] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxxi. 102–116. In the same, xi. 75–97 Wüttke, who derives them from simple strokes instead of pre-existing signs, allows that they must have come originally from Babylon. Renan also traces them to Babylon, though not to the cuneiform (Langues *Semitiques*, i. p. 113). Lenormant's theory of Egyptian origin from hieratic signs does not seem to be well sustained.

[2] The researches of scholars into the Cypriote inscriptions in Greek have suggested the derivation of the Greek characters from the cuneiform.

the second by the Assyrians, the third by the Persians. It concentrated, on the western rim of the Iranian plateau, those diversities of culture by which Iran was distinguished from the simpler uniformities of the far East, and which form the transition to still richer unities of civilization. As these three races, in succession, adopted this form of writing, an increasing force of combination was manifested in it; the ideographic outlines became more artistic; the rectilinear strokes were changed to something like curves. From the oldest Chaldean type, through Assyrian and Median to latest Persian, it reached successively the three great stages of writing, — ideographic, syllabic, alphabetic. It was the inseparable companion of the Iranian mind, and the symbol of its comprehensiveness.

The immense fecundity of the Chinese in secular, and of the Mongols of Central Asia in religious literature, which has been pointed out in a previous volume of this work,[1] prepares us to expect from the kindred race of Accadians, who invented letters and recorded thought in primitive Mesopotamia, evidences of similar mental activity. And as the basis of those civilizations was a developed fetichism, expressed in systems of divination, so we shall not be surprised to find that the earliest cuneiform reports this kind of product on an extended scale. The library of Asshur-bani-pal furnishes fragments of a vast Accadian work on Magic, of no less than two hundred tablets, which "was for Chaldea what the Atharva-Veda was for India." And here, at the beginning of Iranian life, is foreshadowed the grand feature of its maturer consciousness, in the inevitable Dualism of the fetichistic stage of human progress. The moral problem thus early stands as a division of heaven and earth between elementary powers of good and evil, surrounded by which man maintains his liberty and asserts his personality by runic

[1] The Author's *China*, part ii. chap. iv.

spells, talismans, amulets, imprecations, phylacteries, incantations, and sacred names and formulas repeated *ad nauseam*, "boundary which the gods cannot pass,"[1] — at whose bidding diseases and bewitchments come and go, while spirits follow the will of each possessor of their secret law. As in later Persian belief the struggle of good with evil is symbolized by the relations of Light and Darkness, so here, though in a less consciously symbolic and ethical form, light and darkness are antagonists; here also the Dualism takes the form of a positive battle. The war of the seven rebellious *Maskim*, cosmic elementary spirits from the abyss, against the life of the heavens and the earth, against gods and men, whose ravages the spirit of Fire by aid of a divine messenger restrains, seems almost a prelude to the later wars of Ormuzd and Ahriman.[2] Accadian hymns to the protecting deity in Fire are, as translated in Lenormant and Smith, scarcely inferior to those of the Avesta: —

> "Fire, supreme chief rising high in the land! Hero, son of ocean, rising high!
> Fire, with thy pure and brilliant flame, Thou bringest light into the dwellings of darkness!
> Thou decidest the fate of everything which has a name. May the works of the man, his son, shine in purity!
> May he be high as heaven, holy and pure as the earth!
> Thou who chasest the wicked *Maskim*, who strikest terror into the wicked heart,
> Destroyer of enemies, terrible weapon which chasest the plague, fertile, brilliant,
> May the rivers and the countries rest with thee! Expel evil from my body."
> "God of the house, protector of the family!"[3]
> "May the sunrise dissipate darkness, and the evil spirit depart into the desert!"

[1] Inscription quoted by Lenormant in *Chaldean Magic*, p. 44.
[2] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 18. Smith: *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 398.
[3] Ibid., pp. 184–186.

"Thou who curest my face, direct my hand, Light of the Universe,
Thou who causest lies to disappear, and dissipatest evil powers, at the raising of my hand, come at the calls!"[1]
"Illuminator of darkness, opener of the countenance (of sorrow),
Setter up of the fallen, supporter of the sick!
Unto thy light look the great gods, and the spirits of earth all bow before thy face."[2]

The moral bearings of Accadian Dualism are not less striking in so superstitious a fetichism as this. Smith thus translates a penitential psalm: —

"O my Lord, my transgression is great: many my sins.
O my goddess, my transgression is great: many my sins. The transgression that I committed I knew not.
The forbidden thing did I eat. My Lord in his wrath has punished me.
I lay on the ground, and no man took me by the hand.
I cried aloud, none would hear me. To my God I referred my distress, my prayers addressed.
O my God, seven times seven are my transgressions."[3]

Like the later Zoroastrians, the Accadians derived good and evil from one source, *Mul-ge*, though not by conscious abstraction, but rather by inability to analyze the moral sense and the cosmic elements. Curiously enough, *Zrvan*, the name given to the later constructed Unity, has been found in Berosus as mythic personification of the old Turanian race, whose *Mul-ge* certainly prefigures his function in the later faith.[4] The Fravashi, ideal guardian or higher soul assigned to every one in the Avesta, has his prototype for the Accadian faith in a similar guardian, who, however, shares in the infirmities of his follower.[5]

The evil spirits of the Accadians, like the Hebrew, dwelt in the air and desert, and took possession of the body and

[1] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 179, 183.
[2] Sayce's edition of Smith's *Early Babylonia*, p. 24.
[3] Ibid., p. 26.
[4] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 53, 123, 205.
[5] Ibid., p. 182.

mind of man in the form of disease. The future world, as described in Accadian hymns, was similar to the Hebrew *Sheôl;* its imprisoned shades dwelt in darkness and dust, with scarce a sign of feeling, yet somehow survived death with a kind of consciousness, and were even sometimes taken up into the company of the gods.

The instinctive anticipation on this lower stage, of principles in which more advanced culture has found high religious meaning, is not illustrated by the dualism of elementary powers alone. The Accadians had a mystical scale of numbers, and saw a secret virtue in holy names. Thus Seven is the number of spirits of evil (*Maskim*). But the fear and the hope rise, even through the superstitions, to trust in the personal will of all-pervading protective being. The Supreme Name, "the secret of Hea," which he teaches to his son, the mediating god, is called "The Number;" and by this hidden law of the world all forces are ordained and ruled. Jewish reverence for an ineffable Name in Cabala and Talmud goes back, says Lenormant, to the magic of the Chaldean Accadians.[1] In the popular songs and agricultural maxims everything has its own fortunate number. Here are the earliest "teraphim," or little figures of gods and animals, believed to carry the mystic potency involved in their creation, and set up in the thresholds and near the bed[2] as protection, foreshadowing the idolized types and images of more cultured religions. The divining-rod of the Accadian magician anticipates the miraculous staff of Moses, which subjugates those of the Egyptian conjurers;[3] and his arrows, those which the Hebrew prophet casts for similar purposes.[4] We do not here enter into the consideration of the amazing fact that the main portion of that remark-

[1] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 44.

[2] Ibid., p. 28.

[3] 2 Kings, xiii. 14–19.

[4] Sayce's *Lecture on Babylonian Literature before the Royal Institute*, in London, 1878.

able Assyrian literature, gathered into the royal library of Nineveh, — with its great Bibles of hymns and prayers, of magic, of astronomy, agriculture, mythology; above all, with its wonderful epos containing those primeval stories of Solar Labors, of Titan Wars, of a Flood, and of the Descent of a God to the Dead, on which so much of Hebrew and Greek mythology was probably built, — was translated by the Semites out of this old Accadian tongue. I wish to note a more important historical relation in this earliest Turanian phase of the development of Iran.

Even here we find that intense direction of the religious nature towards persons, as distinguished from principles and laws, which is characteristic of that whole development. Its primitive magic is absorbed in personal wills, good and evil, to be loved, feared, or propitiated: it is one endless conversation with a superhuman world of positive aims, purposes, motives. And it has been noticed by Lenormant[1] that Accadian magic differs from Egyptian in the absence of that identification of the dead with deity, which gave the risen spirit the name of Osiris in Egypt, and even raised the animal world into more than a symbol of eternal things. Of this pantheistic loss of the person in the idea, not a trace exists in Accadian thought. Nor do sacred names, formulas, truths, possess the power, as in Hindu and Egyptian piety, to constrain the superhuman world. The Accadian priest bowed before a superior personality, appealing to this in prayer, and conquering evil by the intercession of other persons, such as Merodach of the older hymns. The sovereign Name itself is not so much a more or less abstract form of power, like the Egyptian names of deity, as a positive living Will. Personal mediatorship begins in the old Chaldean tablets. Silik-mulu-khi,[2] who cures diseases, drives out demons, and raises the dead,

[1] *Chaldean Magic*, chap. vi.
[2] Hymns in Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 64, 190, 192, 207.

by knowledge given him as the commissioned son of Hea, — "giving and saving life," "merciful king of heaven and earth," — strikingly resembles the mediatorial saviours of Zoroastrianism and Christianity. Silik-mulu-khi never reached the abstract form of the Christ of the Church, was not an idea, a mystic presence, an all-conquering Name, a process of history, — but remained a person only, endowed with beneficent functions, but absorbing an analogous veneration:

> "Lord, thou art sublime. What transitory being is equal to thee?
> Among gods, the rewarder: among gods, the hero.
> To thee are heaven and earth: to thee are death and life."

He is so evidently regarded as a personage in real life, that the bibliolater identifies him with Nimrod, and the scholar with Merodach. The idea of a mediator, the natural result of a worship of deity as personal will, is traceable, like other Semitic beliefs, to a Turanian antiquity. In its substance, it is precisely what we find it in the relation of the Accadian through Silik-mulu-khi to Hea; namely, that of one individual to a higher individual, facilitated by a third. Transformed, as in Christianity, into a mystic esoteric idea of unity, drawing the mind away from concrete wills to supreme ideas and principles, it loses its essential meaning; and were the change but consistently and completely made, would lose its historic and personal basis altogether, and cease to claim any, or even to admit its possibility. Of this there is no hint in Accadian conceptions; nor even of that interchangeableness of divine names which we find in the Veda dimly foreshadowing the unity of all gods in the impersonal Brahm. Here, on the contrary, every god stands in his own distinct individuality, — spirits without number, inhabiting natural forms, or using natural powers, but not traced back to one principle or grand generalization of the di-

vine. A personal guardian invisibly attends every one, and personal demons possess body and mind. A supreme triad — Anu, Hea, Mul-ge — respectively rule Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld; from the last of whom both good and evil spirits proceed. Even in the dark deeps of Sheôl there dwells a living helper, Nin-dar, slayer of monsters and pests. Finnic magic, as described in the Kalevala, shows a similar triad of personal rulers, a similar dualistic struggle of good and evil powers, with similar exorcisms and spells for expulsion of demons, mainly through gods of light. The religions of these kindred races agree also in placing that kind of metal in which each was specially wont to work under a special god. Similar affinities have been sought in another race believed to have been of Turanian type, the Etruscans; and the evidence, both as regards personal names and religious beliefs, is very striking.[1] The solar origin of the Accadian deities and legends becomes more obvious the more they are traced to their elements, revolving around the movement of the sun through his visible and invisible paths, of the upper and under worlds, of day and night, and through the zodiacal signs, of which these Turanian astronomers seem to have been the framers.[2]

The records of this primeval civilization, which was flourishing in Chaldea at least forty centuries ago, and perhaps a thousand years earlier than that, have been carefully preserved. If the Semitic Assyrians who supplanted the "Accad and Sumir" had done nothing else but translate their contents from the older language and cuneiform type to which they were committed into their own current writing and tongue, not only preserving the originals, but providing for their study the appliances of lexicon

[1] Isaac Taylor in *Report of Oriental International Congress*, 1874 (Trübner).

[2] Hymns as translated in Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic;* and the legends as described by Sayce: *Lecture on Babylonian Literature* before the Royal Institute in London, 1878.

and grammar, and all with a scrupulous historic affection amounting to a filial piety like that of the Chinese in these matters,—they would have entitled themselves to the lasting gratitude of mankind, and can never be charged with having lived to little purpose. And this they have thoroughly done.

The records of the old Accadian kings, from Lig-Bagas of Ur down, are jejune,—mere items of temple and tower-building, their names now given in Semitic, now in Turanian.[1] But their literature was preserved in libraries, located in the numerous cities of Babylonia;[2] and from these the Semitic Assyrians not only brought the great works of poetry, mythology, science, and magic which they translated and studied so carefully, but also probably derived their own system of free public libraries, like those of Sargon and Asshur-bani-pal, into the inner working of which we can look to-day with astonishment that there is nothing new under the sun. The literary capacity of these old Turanians is perhaps the most remarkable fact in history. The oldest of epics, to which the name of Izdubar has been provisionally given, is an elaborated product of Accadian genius, forty centuries old, and shows how early the poetic faculty of man found inspiration in the great lights of heaven.[3] This marvellous epic, with its twelve great legends based on the twelve zodiacal signs, turning their Accadian names into dramatic personifications, and the process of the Sun through their successive mansions into labors of a mythic hero, which are curiously paralleled or repeated in the Semitic and Aryan forms of the Hercules myth, interweaving also the lunar phases in a form which is the prototype of that wide-spread cycle of myths wherein a dying god is

[1] Smith: *Early History of Babylon*. *Records of the Past*, vol. iii.

[2] Smith: *Ancient History of Babylon* (Sayce's ed.), p. 19.

[3] See account of this epic in Sayce's *Babylonian Literature;* and the poem in Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries* (Sayce's ed.).

mourned by the spirit of love in Nature, and sought by her in the Underworld, — this marvellous epic is worthy to be called the cradle of mythologies, even from what we already know of its contents. Another cycle of Accadian legends shows the perception of cosmical order and law as wrung from chaos by personal Will. The wars of gods against Titans in Greek cosmogony are prefigured in those of Bel and Aku and Merodach against the destructive forces of Nature, and the crude abortions — half beasts, half men — of chaos. How monsters of blind aimless types and demons of the dark were conquered by the sabre of Merodach (lightning); how Tiamat, the abyss-mother of this abnormal progeny, was cloven and cast with her brood into the Underworld; how the storm-Titans fought in vain against the heavenly constructive lights, — was a favorite theme of Accadian imagination a thousand years before Hesiod wrote or Homer sung. This progress by the strife of orderly will against blind force is the key-note of Western thought, struck so long ago on the shores of the Persian Gulf, to attune the soul of man with the signs of heaven. This is what the Sun meant to those first watchers of his triumphant march through cloud and storm and night. So the attempt of the seven storm-spirits to destroy the Moon-god was probably the poetic version of an eclipse.[1] The waning and waxing Moon is a queen of heaven descending through the chambers of the death-realm, putting off her garments of glory one by one, and then, divinely delivered, resuming them as she rises again upon a sorrowing and pining world.[2] But long before the epic of Izdubar concentrated the faith of the Accadians, they had uttered their penitence, praise, and prayer to the gods of the heavenly bodies and the elemental powers

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. v. (Fox Talbot's translation).

[2] *Descent of Ishtar;* Schrader's translation. Also *Records of the Past*, vol. i. (Fox Talbot's translation).

in hymns and liturgies, the fragments of which surprise us by their resemblance, in many respects, to the Hindu Veda and the Hebrew Psalms. The objects of worship are different; but the ascription of personal feeling and will is quite as vivid and real as anything even in the latter, and the mastery of Nature by these indwelling powers impregnates elements and forms with a sympathy as intense as that which they yield to Indra or Jehovah. "The will of Silik-mulu-khi rules the heavens and earth like a sword." "He commands the flower, and it ripens; the sea, and it is calm." The "hero Fire clothes space like a garment, presses up the hills and kindles the darkness." "The overwhelming fear of Anu girds his path in the sky." "Day is thy servant, O Istar, and heaven thy canopy." The transgressor, confessing his sins in the dust, and crying without help from man, "addresses his prayer to his god." "The sin thy servant has sinned, bring back to blessedness: let the wind carry away his transgression. May thy heart, like the heart of the mother of the setting day, to its place return!" These hymns must have been accumulating for centuries.

The most characteristic thing about Accadian civilization is the passion for literature. In its old deluge myth, as reported by the Greeks from Berosus,[1] the Chaldean Noah (Xisuthrus) is bidden to bury the sacred writings at Sippara, his native city, before the flood comes; and there, after he has been taken up to heaven, his followers return to recover them. Oannes, the fish-god from the sea-coast, to whom these primitive Chaldeans ascribe their culture, is expressly said to have brought them letters. Like the Chinese, they invent a historic system of writing, — to the West of Asia what that of China was to the East. Peaceable and industrious, they meditated on the world, and

[1] Abydenus and Alexander Polyhistor; Lenormant: *Le déluge et l'épopée Babylonienne*, p. 8.

turned the results of patient observation to legend, science, and song of praise. Their science, as yet in the elementary stage in many respects, was at least inspired by the search for causes, by the sense of continuity and development in Nature; and this far more than with the Semitic races, who inherited their culture, and used it mainly in the interest of supernaturalism and national exclusiveness. They not only worshipped the great elemental wholes,— the heaven, the earth, the sea, — but wrought with marvellous energy at the foundations of all future astronomy, agriculture, and commerce. It was certainly Accadian observation which began and continued the great astronomical work of Sargon's library in seventy-two books, inscribed in the name of Bel-Merodach as god of the starry heavens, intermediate between the upper sphere and the earth. Largely magical and astrological, it contained notices of comets, conjunctions, eclipses, lunar and planetary phases, cyclic returns, and even, as some suppose, of spots on the sun. The Accadians were the inventors of our twelve zodiacal signs, with their very names, and of our great divisions of time into the year of twelve months and three hundred and sixty days, and our week of seven days, which they named after sun, moon, and planets, and separated by sabbaths or rest-days, religiously set apart by statute. They named the Milky Way the "long path," and it has been affirmed by decipherers that they made celestial charts, and drew lines corresponding to equator and ecliptic, dividing them into degrees; and Layard found a magnifying lens at Nineveh, on whose historical relations conjecture may well be rife.[1] Fragments of agricultural works point us to them as the industrious founders of the vast system of irrigation and production of which the wealth of Babylonia was the result. We have their *Fasti;* their lists of classified animals and plants, their

[1] This is carefully summarized from Sayce's *Babylonian Literature.*

geographical statistics and lists; their labor songs and maxims, their farmer's calendar, their system of ownership in lands and harvests, and records of their sales and wills and loans. The far-reaching commercial life of Babylon and Nineveh, by land and sea, must have sprung from this older civilization of industry and culture. They had an architecture of their own, and wrought in textile fabrics and in stone. Their laws guarded the right of inheritance, of private "sanctuary," secured married women's property, gave the mother the highest place in the family,[1] punishing rejection of her more severely than the same sin against the father, though distinguishing against the female in cases of infidelity. They fine cruelty towards slaves, though very inadequately.[2] They strictly unite Church and State; the statutes of the land are the commandments of Hea, to which the king must conform in their traditional rights, or the nation perishes; judges are placed under oaths and penalties; brothers exhorted to mutual love and generous dealing in the name of the law, and in the temples of the gods;[3] and documents of loans, contracts, transfers, and debts are preserved on papyrus leaves as well as on stone. Here is a long advance on patriarchal institutions. The free world of the West begins to appear, singularly enough, in a Turanian race. Well might this historic race dwell on the mastery of chaos in their songs to creative gods of cosmic order and enlightened will. On their firm foundation the religions and cultures of the world were built, and every hour reveals some new root of civilization pushing through this till recently unimagined soil. The far-famed learning, the parent-religion of Babylon, the mysterious gift of the Chaldean in all that the ancient world held worthy of awe

[1] E. Thomas (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xi. p. 1, new series).
[2] *Records of the Past*, vol. iii.
[3] Ibid., vols. v. vii. (Sayce and Smith).

and wonder, has found at last its historic conditions; and, like all that man most venerates, testifies, with all the Semite's prestige of miracle in its train, to the natural law of evolution, to the truth that all seeming beginnings point beyond themselves.

The Assyrians who transmitted this Turanian wisdom illustrate the same laws. Their respectful heed to it, and their patient care for its preservation by grammatical researches, syllabaries, lists of corresponding words, was a recognition of universal relations, an escape from race-prejudice, surprising at so early a period. It seems to lay the corner-stone of a cosmopolitanism which has since conditioned the progress of civilization. In various forms we shall continue to find this force of combination the special gift of Iran to history. We note it here on the outermost edge of that region geographically, and at its remotest epoch historically, as transition of the human mind to conscious progress. It is here that races successively open their sympathy, — first the Turanian, then the Semitic, and then the Aryan, — a movement, it will be recognized, of immense interest in the social history of mankind. Only the wealth of modern archæological science has revealed what unimagined continuity of social evolution through the sympathy of races, inspired this remote antiquity, — a chaos, it had been believed, of superstition and war. As the heart of Asshur opened to receive the gift of Turan, so the Mede and the Persian afterwards welcomed that of conquered Nineveh and Babylon; until the aristocratic exclusiveness of the Greek in culture and of the Hebrew in religion was confronted by that oceanic tide of nations, that ill-compacted but swarming empire of a thousand tribes, that movable Babylon, gathered around a Cyrus or a Xerxes, to teach the one race a larger synthesis of humanity, and to prepare for the other a historic indebtedness which should in

after times sap that claim of special inspiration which its intense self-confidence had imposed on the civilized world.[1]

Even so conservative a scholar as George Smith was at length led, by his Assyrian studies, to accept the conclusion that "antiquity borrowed far more from the valley of the Euphrates than from that of the Nile," and that "Chaldea, rather than Egypt, is the home of European civilization."[2] It is not less true, as we shall see, that the Hebrew religion and records were inherited products, in very large degree, of the same soil; and that Euphrates, not Jordan, is the deepest source of Jewish and Christian tradition. Renan, who has comprehended very imperfectly the value of cuneiform studies, while allowing that "before the entrance of Indo-European and Semitic nations on the field of history, there were very ancient civilizations, to which we are indebted for elements of industry and a long experience of material life," adds that "all this fades before such facts as the mission of Moses," etc. (!) What part has been played by these older races in directing the religious life of the Jewish and Christian world will be a question for our present inquiry.

It is difficult as yet to determine how large a portion of Assyrian culture was derived from Accadian sources. The development was certainly continuous, and, even without the light thrown on it by cuneiform studies, is clearly traceable to the sea-coast at the mouth of the Euphrates. It is here that all ancient tradition places the earliest social, industrial, intellectual life of Western Asia. Hither, as

[1] The Assyrian kings have left the record of their collecting, copying, and preserving of the old tablets from Babylon and its numerous sister seats of learning, of their careful arrangement of them in libraries in great Assyrian cities under minute care, and of the steady growth of these libraries from the end of the ninth to the middle of the seventh century before Christ. (Sayce's Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 27.)

[2] *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 451.

Berosus reports from Babylonian records, came the mythic civilizers, — Oannes and his Annedoti, half fish, half man, — at repeated intervals, to teach rude men the arts of life. Whether these mystic seven represent so many sacred books of an early priesthood, or whether their amphibious type points to "Cushite navigators" bringing Egyptian culture, or whether they are but mythic expressions for the principal Accadian gods, Anu and Hea, out of whose names most of their individual titles appear to be formed, as well as their general appellation (*Annedoti*),[1] or possibly for the Accadian Hea-khan, "Hea, the fish,"[2] — they are at least natural types of social origin for a race dwelling in the constant presence of oceanic life. The myth belongs to the great cycle, of which Dagon and Derketo, Jonah, etc., are forms. The same causes peopled the Chaldean chaos with sea-monsters, under the sway of Tiamat, "the watery abyss," whence the gods also rise and create. In the mythologies of Asia generally, "ocean" means the atmospheric deep, — space mingling with sea, for the mind as it does for the eye.[3] In the Chaldean we first hear the roar of the actual ocean, not as mere infinite space, but as productive living power. There was a fine presentiment of scientific truth in the old cosmogonies that made the sea the parent of all things. It is here, on the shore of the Persian Gulf, that Bel-Merodach, the Semitic god of civilization, had his strife with the sea, as primal chaotic element, cleaving her in two, and then making the cosmic order from his own divided brain. Similar forms of pantheistic evolution, in India and Greece, produce Brahma from a dismembered Prajâpati, and Athene from the split brain of Zeus; and from the disseverment of a primal giant Ymir comes the Norse

[1] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 201-203.

[2] Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis* (Sayce's edition), p. 325.

[3] Eckstein on Cosmogony of Sanchoniathon (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xiv. xv., fifth series).

universe. So strong was their sense of contrast between orderly law and blind caprice, that the bridge from one to the other seemed to the worshippers of Nature to require a tragedy of self-evolution. Its connection in Chaldean cosmogony with the sea marks, as we shall see hereafter, a very primitive form of this recognition of necessary law. Here too were the earliest sanctuaries and sacerdotal colleges, schools of astrology and mathematics.[1] Here was Ur, reputed home of the Hebrews, most Turanian of Chaldean cities; here Surippak, place of books; here Erech, seat of priestly culture; here the ancestral land of the Phœnicians, sea-lovers and merchants of the ancient world, whose primitive world-plasm was the water, and whose gods, like the Chaldean, were fish-men. Here the oldest Semites mingled with earlier settlers of that great Scythic race (Turanian), of which Justin says that in early times they covered all known regions of Asia.[2] Here Bâb-ilu (gate of the god) became the Semitic name of an old Accadian city, Kâ-Dingira (same meaning), while the kings of Chaldea proper had still Turanian names.[3] At last "Asshur went forth and builded Nineveh,"[4] — the god of the nation being put for the nation, and the name of the nation then used, Hebrewwise, as a personal name. And so the two cities, Semite and Semito-Turanian, grow side by side for centuries of rivalry, till the beginning of the eighth century before Christ saw the power of Babylon broken by the great Sargonide dynasty of Nineveh, which ruled as one the two greatest empires of the East. The closing period of the Assyrian empire, from Tiglath-pileser to Asshur-bani-pal, concentrated the fruits of a civilization of fifteen centuries; till, enfeebled by luxury, and harassed by Scythian hordes, it yielded to the hardy mountaineers of Cyaxares the Mede and his

[1] Lenormant: *Fragm. Cosmog.*, p. 220.
[2] Justin: *Historia*, ii. 3.
[3] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 326.
[4] Genesis, x. 11.

Babylonian allies. Then Babylon rose again to the zenith, and Nebuchadnezzar made her the heir in full of all past ages.

In the light of recent researches, the statement of Oppert that the two elements of Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization were too closely interwoven to be distinguished, either in respect of language, manners, or worship, appears extreme. But in the most important features of what we may call the Iranian type of historic influence, there were certainly striking resemblances between these two races. To the nerve of Turanian industry corresponded that of Assyrian passion for military success. Alike in Babylon and Nineveh the records of monarchs are one continued boast of devotion to their ideals, whether of overthrowing kingdoms or of erecting shrines. In both the *ziggurat* shoots upward its seven stages, bearing witness to the superstitions of an audacity that must surely have called down the wrath of a jealous God. That Turanian thirst for universal dominion under a single head, which appears alike in the spread of these tribes over Western Asia to build up a vast industrial empire on the Persian Gulf, in the ever-advancing expansion of the Chinese emperor-worshippers to the opposite shore of the continent, and in the shorter-lived conquests of a Tamerlane or a Genghis-Khan, has its analogue in the boundless ambition of Semito-Assyrian kings. In Asshur-bani-pal or Tiglath-pileser, scourger of nations, king of kings, lord of the universe, one with heaven's host, earthly image of a Semitic Asshur or Jahveh, the personal will stands in its pure exclusiveness as absolute human godhood, burning with a nervous fire that consumes all flesh. It is the worship of such exclusive authority that impresses us in the politico-religious life of Assyria, Judea, Arabia, and the world-coveting and world-mastering faiths that sprang from these Semitic centres; and it was inherited, in less extreme form, by the Persian and his

Shâhân-shâh. In all these the nations follow, as the million ripples their tidal-wave, some omnipotent king or messiah, over whom visibly or invisibly hovers his archetypal self, the winged man, whether as Ormuzd, Asshur, or Jahveh, or the Christian Creator and Judge. Thus appears, in its instinctive might, the all-productive worship of will-power, of which modern religions have been the successive waves. The same tribal exigencies in these Semitic empires created Il and Bel, and Asshur and Jahveh, and Arabian Allah.

The gods of Assyria are the older gods of Chaldea, with the conspicuous exception of Asshur,[1] who, as special supreme tribal deity, takes the place before occupied by Bel.[2] The kings recognize his constant, present will, and rule by his dictating word, intensely sympathizing with his passionate and jealous nature, dedicating to him their conquests and monuments, palaces and temples and public works, in gratitude and joy, and calling themselves, in pride or in loving dependence, by his name.[3] No sense of personal relation with deity can be more intensely real, and none has ever inspired greater enthusiasm in conquest and in work. So real and human is Asshur, that Rawlinson thinks he must have been a deified man, a positive "son of Shem "(!)[4] A degree of similar communion is made possible in the case of inferior gods by the energy of volition of which they are all types of one kind or another. The monumental symbol of Belus is the horned cap of Hea, the god of wisdom, the serpent; of Sin, the crescent or new moon; of Shamas, the

[1] According to Sayce, Asshur means the water-border (of the Tigris). According to Kiepert, *athurâ*, in Darius's inscriptions, means "good or just;" originally "even, smooth." *Lehrbuch der alten Geogr.*, p. 150.

[2] Berosus in Dubois' *Assyria and Chaldea*, pp. 56, 57.

[3] Not less than thirty-one of the thirty-nine names of Assyrian kings contain the name or designation of a god, thirteen of these contain the element Asshur: as *Asshur-bil-nisi-su*, "Asshur (is) the lord of his people;" *Asshur-bani-pal*, "Asshur is protector of the child;" and *Buzur-Asshur*, "a stronghold (is) Asshur." Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 248-249.

[4] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 3.

four-rayed orb, or creative sun; of Vul, the thunderbolt; of Ninip, the winged guardian man-bull at the gate, and the herculean strangler of lions; of Nergal, war-king, the man-lion; of Nebo, god of learning, the sunrise (?), or the wedge, and on his statues was written "The preserver of those who hear him and bless his name."[1] Merodach is the redeeming god, ever at hand to save and restore,— the Krishṇa, the Buddha, the Christ, of the Assyrian. The angry gods, especially Anu, stand ready to avenge themselves, to break in with flood and fire and pestilence.[2] These gods of human will are coupled, human-wise, with goddesses. The Persian's symbol of Ormuzd, a winged warrior, with bow and lifted hand, enclosed in the world-circle, was transmitted to him from the Asshur of the Ninevite kings. Their symbol of growth also, the Tree with the candelabra-branches, or ending upward in the pine-cone or vegetable flame, has descended, by the same right of human significance, in Persian fir-cone and Hebrew burning bush and tree of life. How these gods of the will battle with monsters on the monumental walls,—strange, half-human creatures, fit survivals of the Chaldean chaos, but all terribly alive and instinct with evil purpose! The kings are all Nimrods, and boast their trophies in hunting. They are flames of wrath, besoms of destruction; desolators of nations, forever on the raid. When we think of Assyrian art, we think of a splendid vitality, animal and human, and an intense will; of comparative contempt for mere scenery; of crude and grudging treatment of lower forms of Nature; of every quality that goes with personal force,—strength, grandeur, motive power, ideal purpose, dramatic sympathy with all vigorous life, earnest religious *abandon*. Everywhere these figures spring to incarnate

[1] Ménant: *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, p. 128.

[2] George Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, the legend of Dibbara, pp. 125-129; the sin of Zu, pp. 115-124.

life; the very cornices are crowned with animals, the scroll-patterns are tree-shoots and winged bulls. In the treatment of living energy, Nimrud and Koyunjik bear away the palm from Greece herself, and show little inferiority in technical science. The horse and his rider thundering to battle with level spear; the resistless king, of one body and soul with his rushing steeds, launching arrows like thunderbolts on the foes of his god; the creatures with outspread wings and eagle eyes that guard the sacred tree;[1] the firm advance and lifted hands of lower gods adoring Asshur; the dying agony of the wounded lion;[2] the horses dropping slowly with failing knees; the terror of the wild ass, speared, and torn by hounds;[3] the oxen moving towards each other with human feeling in every limb;[4] the guardian bulls, with open jaws and terrible talons,— everything in this art is alive with invincible passion, with triumph or tenderness, aspiration or pain. I cannot but think the exquisite lines of Rossetti, on the Bull-god from Nineveh, have in them more of beauty than of truth: —

"Those heavy wings spread high
So sure of flight, which do not fly;
That set gaze, never on the sky;
Those scriptured flanks it cannot see;
Its crown, a brow-contracting load;
Its planted feet that trust the sod: . . .
O Nineveh! was this thy God, —
Thine also, mighty Nineveh?"

In Assyrian art, derived mainly from Babylon, begins the full arch, the column, the arcade, the aqueduct, the tunnel, all forms that inaugurate movement and growth; immense motive force of transportation by pulley, lever, roller, and by human multitudes, working as one man, —

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 366.
[2] Ibid., p. 355.
[3] Ibid., pp. 356–357.
[4] Ibid., p. 351.

all delicate forms of working art-designs of metal, as well as grand sculpture in stone. It is an art that presses onward and upward, a steady advance; as the kings grow in ability to the last, so their latest palaces are their best, their last age the golden. The Assyrian *ziggurat* spanned the whole of being, — an observatory and a tomb; a tower ascending to heaven, a monument resting on the dead; it watched the stars above, the graves beneath; that of Babylon held the tomb of Belus, and kings were buried there as gods. Egypt has been supposed to be the parent of Assyrian art, because many symbols are common to the two countries, — the crux, the lotus, the goddess on a lion, the scarabæus, the sphinx;[1] but the spirit in the two styles differs as a flame of fire from a pyramid of stone. So intense is this creative fire, this instant will, that it consumes itself in its burning. Longing for the immortal, it seizes on the most transient materials. With plenty of stone at command, Assyrian architecture followed the traditions of Babylon, and used, to a great extent, sun-dried brick. Its palaces rapidly decayed. The impulsive rulers incessantly dismantled their own work, — each sacrificed that of his predecessor to the ambition of building more grandly, or else to anticipate the swift fate that approached it.[2] As if the mere doing was enough, they set their gigantic structures on mounds of earth, which gave way under their weight. We have here the grandest testimony to that filiation of races, that continuity of historic growth, which is the inspiration of modern science, and has dispelled the superstitions of special, positive religions. Crete, Cyprus, and Sicily, Mycenæ and Ilion and Corinth, the isles of the Aegean and the shores of Asia Minor every day reveal new evidences that the art as well as the mythology of the classic world was

[1] Layard; *Nineveh and its Remains*, ii. 170, 174.
[2] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 336.

to a large degree an evolution of Assyrian ages. The old Cabiri of Samothrace, the Sphinx, the horned Venus of the recent excavations in Greece, the finely carved cylinders and castings of amulets and seals may be traced across the Ionian Sea to these cradles of thought and work.

What a comment it is on the passionate self-will embodied in king-worship that so little has come down to us of domestic architecture or popular amusement! The people are there on the monuments; they are bringing tributes, drawing colossal bulls to the temples, hurled from the battlements of a besieged city, or shot down by royal arrows: in various ways they are carrying out the instant will of their kings. But hardly more truly so than in the long ages of modern civilization that have succeeded the monarchies of Asia. We must not suppose them ciphers. They do not show the merely conventional uniformity of the Egyptian masses; but more of individual life is represented, as of those who shared the spirit of achievement that leads or drives them on, — and this, though the feelings of family affection are not expressed as in Egypt. The main themes of the inscriptions are campaigns and trophies; but all the products of the Orient are figured there, and prove a stirring world of industry and trade. Hammurabi, Tiglath-pileser, and Sennacherib boast great works of irrigation, "for the good of the people," helps to their agriculture. Assyrian productive labor must have followed in the Chaldean track. When Sargon says he has cleared forests, opened canals, dug wells, and spread fertility,[1] the claim involves labor of the masses for their own advantage as well as for his glory. The people of Nineveh in the seventh century before Christ traded from India in the East to Tartessus in the West.[2] Records are extant of private contracts, and even of private banking

[1] Ménant: *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, p. 100.
[2] See Sayce: *Babylonian Literature*, p. 50.

houses.[1] The library of Asshur-bani-pal alone contained a greater amount of writing than all the monuments of Egypt, says Layard.[2] However this may be, it must have employed thousands of scribes, whose art of preserving records was itself a mark of popular civilization and established industrial culture. So were the provisions we find made for security of contracts and their registration.[3] That kings and people were mere voluptuaries is a Hebrew slander, utterly without evidence. A nation that maintained for nearly ten centuries a constantly advancing life of literary, military, and industrial power may be said to have burnt itself out in the fire of its own aspirations, but is surely no subject for our commonplaces on the fall of empires through luxury or depravity. Empires perish when destructive external forces are too strong for their inward force of self-preservation. It was the invasion of Assyria by Scythian hordes in the sixth century that gave her the decisive blow; which was only followed up by Cyaxares and his Medes. There was somewhat beyond the Semite in Assyrian culture, especially industrial culture. No other people of this race, — Hebrew, Arab, Canaanite, — showed such gifts; even the Phœnicians and their African colonies were carriers of products, rather than creators. In fact, what we see in this civilization is the wonderful fusion of an older Turanian mental industry and material constructiveness, shown in the buildings at Babylon, with Semitic passion and will. Both ideal and concrete elements were already provided in Chaldean forms; and to these were now supplied the nerve-conductors that could bring the one to bear on the other in a magnificent outburst of personal Will, lasting nearly a millennium, and taking tribute from hosts of kings.

[1] George Smith: *Babylonian Literature*, p. 51.

[2] *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 347.

[3] Lenormant: *Ancient History of the East*, i. 424.

Nor is this national persistence explicable from the Semitic side. The Semite is unfitted for success in political construction. Arbitrary, capricious, impulsive, he is incapable of giving substantial existence to the State, of instituting law as independent of instant overruling wills. Semitic Assyria herself had this imperfection. The empire of the Sargonides was a "mere congeries" of States, so loosely joined that revolt was incessant, and the main business of the kings was punishing their subjects for refusing tribute, conquering rivals, deporting multitudes, extirpating rebellious dynasties. Shalmaneser made thirty-one expeditions for these and similar objects in as many years. Subject States for the most part retained their local institutions and gods. Centralization, except such as could be effected by royal governors, with ill-defined powers, was beyond these children of passionate desire. What military prowess and wild enthusiasm could do, Semitism accomplished; but other elements, more suited to culture and combination, were required to supplement and counterbalance them, — and these were probably of Turanian origin. Tiglath-pileser boasts that he brought forty-two countries, from the rising to the setting sun, under one government and one religion. The trade, science, art, literature, industry, that drew all interests of nations to centre in Nineveh and Babylon, was rooted in forces older than the Semitic conqueror, and destined to outlast him.

The Assyrian kings absorbed all personalities, suffered no humble emotions or popular expressions on the great monuments of their reigns, were gods on earth, whose physiognomy changed not from age to age, and whose immortality permitted no record of their crimes or defeats. Their "reigns were glorified by official scribes in formulas of great ambiguity, doubtless largely of mythic construction and accepted fiction;" but they were not mere

scourges of mankind. Sennacherib calls himself "one who keeps his oath, guardian of the laws, follower of justice;" glories in opening springs for the people to own, and making aqueducts and water-wheels, and streets splendid as the sun.[1] Sargon's palace, built in the eighth century before Christ, must have been the finest piece of architecture then existing. Asshur-nazir-pal, in the previous century, inscribed upon his, the noblest work of the kind by far then achieved, the prayer, "May this my seat of power endure forever."[2] They are great, heroic hunters, destroying on a vast scale the wild beasts that in their times encroached on the security of the land and its labors; and they boast of this as they do of victories over empires. Asshur-bani-pal is "strengthener of the people," and "wars against oppressors." Esarhaddon gathers "the people on lofty seats, and feasts them with the gods."[3] Even Tiglath-pileser I. "has mercy on those who submit," and boasts of "improving the condition of his subjects, and obtaining for them security and plenty."[4] At home there seem to have been few or no revolutions; of popular ones not one is mentioned. Sargon not only allows the towns to follow their ancient ways,[5] but even rectifies the institutions which they did not like, and encourages their priests to free discussion.[6] Asshur-bani-pal engraves his moral obligations on tablets, and erects them in his palace for public inspection: —

"If the king in his punishments violates the laws and statutes of the land, the people perish; his fate changes, and another takes his place. In place of unjust kings and judges, the Judge of heaven and earth shall appoint just ones. If the judges take bribes, or officers

[1] *Records of the Past* (Inscription of Sennach.), i. 31, 32.
[2] Ménant: *Les Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, p. 93.
[3] *Records of the Past*, iii. 122-23.
[4] Ibid., v. 15, 17, 18, 22.
[5] Ibid., ix. 15; vii. 49, 54.
[6] Ibid., vii. 122.

extort tribute, the land shall go to its enemies. Whether Ruler or Priest or General (he be), whoever is guardian of the Temple, shall revere the shrines of the great gods."[1]

It adds to the interest of these remarkable affirmations that they were copied by the Assyrians from an old Babylonian text. In their substance they probably belong to the early Accadian civilization,[2] and illustrate the high point it had reached in the science of government. This last of the great Assyrian rulers confesses that none of his predecessors had regarded these ancient edicts of the Higher Law.

Here, as elsewhere, the strength of the Semite was in his religious earnestness. His passions are the voices of gods. Ishtar says to Esarhaddon, "An unsparing deity am I." "By her high command" he "plants his standards."[3] Insurgents are rebels against the great gods, who visit them with the sword of their anger.[4] Hear what these world-masters say. "I brought the judgment of Asshur my god on evil men."[5] "I did for the gods what they willed. . . . I prayed them that I might conquer my enemies; they heard and came to my aid. My great bow that Asshur gave me I took." "I called upon Asshur for life, children, victory, and I put my faith in him."[6] These kings are ministers of jealous gods, sent to extirpate heretics, to restore the true worship.[7] Tiglath-pileser enumerates the whole Assyrian Olympus, and ascribes all the glory of his conquests to each and every god at the beginning of his record. They glory in his victories. Sin delays the sunrise to destroy the foes of Asshur-bani-pal.[8] In return, the conquerors feast their divine masters in palaces, filled with trophies and dedicated to

[1] *Records of the Past*, vii. 119-122.
[2] Ibid., iii. 104.
[3] Ibid., p. 105.
[4] Ibid., iii. 123 (Inscrip. of Esarhad.)
[5] Ibid., i. 50 (Inscrip. of Sennach.).
[6] Ibid., vii. 55 and 11, 12 (Inscrip. of Sargon); vii. 77 (Inscrip. of Sennach.).
[7] Ibid., iii. 41.
[8] Ibid., ix. 50.

their service through all generations to come.[1] The resemblance of this Assyrio-Babylonian piety to the Hebrew is obvious. Nebuchadnezzar sings of Merodach as the Psalmist of his Jahveh: —

"When the Lord Merodach made me, he placed my germ in my mother's womb, and being conceived, I was brought forth. I, thy worshipper, am the work of thy hand; and the empire over multitudes hast thou assigned me, according to thy favor, accorded unto all. May thy majesty be exalted! may it endure in thy worship! In my heart may it continue, and the life which is devoted unto thee!"[2]

"O God Merodach, says Neriglissar [sixth century before Christ], Light of the Gods, Father, even for thy high unchanging glory a house have I builded! May its fulness increase! may it acquire treasures! may its tributes multiply from the kings of all nations from the East to the West! May they come up into it forever!"[3]

Nabonidus prays that the fear of his god (the Moon) may prolong his life; and for his son, that "the great lord may fix his awe in his heart that he may never fall into iniquity, and that his glory may endure."[4]

On the "black obelisk" of Shalmaneser, Bel is "Father of the gods and the Creator;" Ishtar, "the Perfecter of Heroism;" Nebo, the "Father on high."[5]

Schrader has translated several fragments which show the depth of this Assyrian piety, in the sense of divine help and of retributory law: —

"He who fears not his God, shall like a reed be broken.
He who honors not Istar, his strength shall wither.
He fades as the light of a star is withdrawn;
Like waters of the night he vanishes."

"Who will teach me thy high command?
Who will do the like with thee?
Among the gods thy brothers, thou hast no equal."

[1] *Records of the Past*, iii. 123, 124.
[2] Ibid., v. 113–115.
[3] Ibid., v. 142.
[4] Ibid., v. 148.
[5] Ibid., v. 29.

"Ilu, my maker, take hold of my arms!
Guide the breath of my mouth, guide my hands,
O Lord of Light!"

"O Sun, at thy command, his sins are atoned for,
His transgressions are abolished." [1]

A prayer for the soul of a dying person is translated by Talbot, —

"Like a bird may it fly to a lofty place!
To the holy hands of its God may it ascend!"

and another: —

"The man who is departing in glory, may his soul shine radiant as brass!"

"Bind the sick man to heaven, for from earth he is being torn away.
Of the brave man who was so strong, his strength is departed.
May the Sun, greatest of gods, receive his soul into his holy hands." [2]

Asshur-bani-pal prays to Ishtar to aid him against an invading king of Elam, addressing her as queen of queens and queen of gods, and imploring her presence on the field of battle to turn the tide in his favor. She replies, "Fear not; according to thy prayer, thy eyes shall see judgment." And "in the vision of a seer she speaks to him as a mother to a child." [3]

The king prayed directly to his gods, without intermediation of priest, and consecrated his kingdom to their service; yet had faith in the dreams of seers, at least when they predicted him victory over his foes.[4] Asshur-bani-pal pays special court to Ishtar, queen of the gods, terrible in battle, who appears to his seer after his own invocation of her, with halo and bow, and like a mother in travail to bring him forth.[5]

[1] Schrader: *Höllenfahrt der Istar*, pp. 88, 96, 97, 105.

[2] *Records of the Past*, iii. 134, 135.

[3] Ibid., vii. 67, 68.

[4] Ibid. (Asshur-bani-pal), i. 77; ix. 52, 59.

[5] Ibid., ix. 52.

This religion survives death. The spiritual part of man (*utukku*) dwells in a dreary underworld, yet is sometimes said to be raised to the heaven of the gods, as are the heroes of the epic of Izdubar. Certain passages in a hymn concerning feasts, blessings, and rest from care, supposed by Lenormant and others to refer to a future life, are believed by Schrader to describe the future prosperity of Assyria.[1] But there is no question that the conception of death carried with it the meaning of utter helplessness and gloom. It is that which we find in the Phœnician tombs and the Hebrew scriptures, — the underworld, or Sheôl. The grave leads to darkness, to the house men enter, but cannot depart from; the road men go, but cannot return; abode of famine, where earth is their food, where ghosts flutter like birds, and dust lies undisturbed on the threshold.[2] There an angry goddess punishes the intruder from the realms of day, even though a queen of heaven. Even in these abysses there is a fountain of life, of which Ishtar drinks and is released. For she is the goddess of love, who has descended there because "the son of life" has died, and for Nature's sake must be recovered that all things perish not. But whether all inconspicuous persons passed at death into this doleful Hades, and whether, as the epic would imply, heaven was the reward only of the great, of rulers, divines, or conquerors, is matter of doubt. Heaven is divided into spheres, which testifies to personal interest in the hereafter. The ghost can be brought back to earth, to speak and teach.[3] There are passages in which the idea of death brings even poetic sentiment. It enfolds Heabani "like a garment." When the "righteous man" dies, "may he rise on high, with garments silver white, ascending to the

[1] *Records of the Past*, vii. 133, 134. Lenormant: *La Divination*, p. 153.

[2] *Descent of Ishtar*. *Records of the Past*, i. 145. Lenormant: *Origines d. Hist.*, pp. 174, 175.

[3] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 167.

Sun, greatest of gods!"[1] But so far as now appears, there is no distinction of good and evil, no law of retribution taking effect on all men after death;[2] and there is no hint that the common fate of a gloomy sheôl was in any sense a doom, or even a consequence of sin. Like the lament of Job, that he must depart "to the land of darkness and death-shade, where no order is, and the light itself is night,"[3] these Accadian images probably paint the instinctive shrinking of man from the sense of his mortality. The vivid picture of the descent of Ishtar through the seven gates, of temple, images, and altars, and a judge on his golden throne,[4] of her gradual disrobing and reinvestment, is doubtless, as has already been said, explicable rather from astronomy than from popular belief.

The extreme interest of the Mongolian race in the tomb as a centre of religious rites and family tributes, causes us to feel no surprise at the immense number of these receptacles on the soil of Chaldea, reminding the traveller of ancient Etruria or modern China. Here are collected all things believed desirable for the departed, — vessels of bronze and clay, images, cylinders (for writing), and articles of food. It is one of those inconsistencies which mark all crude belief about the dead, that these solid substances should have been supposed available for such mere shadowy ghosts as they were imagined to be. These objects correspond to the papyrus and cylinders on which the people of Egypt wrote their private sympathies and histories, but more obscurely. But while there is so much in Chaldea to testify to popular belief in the reality of a future life, nothing as yet has come from Assyria to tell us what was to befall the souls of the generations as they passed away. Their place of the dead was as dim and

[1] *Records of the Past*, iii. 135.

[2] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 166. Smith (*Assyrian Discoveries*, 221) says that Sheôl was destined for the wicked; but on what authority?

[3] Job x. 20–22.

[4] *Records of the Past*, i. 151.

shadowy as the Hebrew Sheôl. Was the glory of the nation and the immortality of the royal will so absorbing that, as with the Hebrew, no ethical sanction or spiritual motive was sought in the future life, and the mind of the people did not rest in its associations? That instinct, or intuition of continuity, on which the belief in immortality is based, with the Semitic nations secured expression in a profound interest in visible destinies on earth. And this is as abundantly shown in the abounding life on the Assyrian monuments, as the interest of the Chaldean in the future life is evidenced in his passion for tombs. The one class represents the Mongolian, the other the Semitic, mind.

The royal monuments, Assyrian or Accadian, are not a mere dull record of wars and buildings; this flame of conquest rises into poetic feeling, and into the frenzy of barbarian passions, which remind us of the wars of the Hebrews in the days of the Judges and the Kings. These royal conquerors "scale the mountain peaks, the misty heights where no bird can pass;" they "rush like eagles, in one day, upon the strongholds of their foes."[1] They love rough, dangerous places, leap the cliffs like wild goats, and drink the coldest spring-water from the rock.[2] They "scatter corpses like chaff; thrash the land like an ox."[3] Their "faultless horses step, yoked to their chariots, through pools of blood, and the wheels are clogged with the slain," while "the heads of soldiers are stuffed in baskets," like scalps on the raids of savages.[4] They "thunder like the god of the air;" they "cast down rings and bracelets like the fall of rain;"[5] and the hearts of kings grow "feeble as children; they trample their own soldiers under foot, and flee like scared birds."[6]

[1] *Records of the Past*, i. 15.
[2] Ibid., i. 42, 43.
[3] Ibid., iii. 88, 94.
[4] Ibid., i. 51, 52.
[5] Ibid., i. 51.
[6] Ibid., i. 53.

Asshur-bani-pal celebrated "the harvest-feast when the gods seated him on the throne of his fathers, when Vul poured down his rain, Hea feasted his people, the seed bore fivefold, the cattle multiplied, and famine was at an end."[1]

In the myth of the seven storm spirits, who, compounded of beasts and tempests, and moving in meteors, plot secretly against the Sun and Moon, the vexed gods, after watching them vigilantly, resist their assaults, when, rushing like the hurricane, they fall like firebrands on the earth.[2] This prototype of the Greek war of gods and Titans shows how the passionate genius of these world-stormers invested eclipses and lightnings with its own human ideals of battle for dominion over the world.

So in the Accadian poem of the Descent of Ishtar, goddess of love and daughter of the Moon,[3] the sympathy of Nature with an ideal human purpose is signified by the refusal of the earth to bear fruit, or the beasts to bring forth young, or the gods to find comfort who preside over the change of seasons, till through their interference the wandering soul (or son) of life and growth is released from the bolts and bonds of the death-world. It is not wrath that dooms her to such descent, but her grief for life cut off in its prime, which stirs her to the sacrifice; and which we can only interpret by the resurrection of all things in Nature at her return, proving that the universe was secure, and that life and light were the lords of darkness and death. Her seven royal forms of beauty, stripped from her body one by one by the inexorable law of the underworld, are one by one restored; and the death of the Oriental Adonis, or youth of Nature, is changed by love stronger than death or hell into resurrection.

[1] *Records of the Past*, i. 61.
[2] Ibid., v. 164-166.
[3] Schrader in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Augsburg), June 19, 1874.

Our review of Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization has shown its remarkable contrast in respect of mental type with those of the Hindus and the Chinese. It is not *cerebral* like the one, nor *muscular* like the other; but is represented by the *nervous* force, in that ethnic symbolism in which we have found the best expression of Oriental qualities. In other words, it recognizes both ideas and things, both inward and outward relations; subject and object; bringing the two sides together in mutual dependence, as efficient cause and instant result. Hindu *thought* clings to abstractions; Chinese *work* plunges through concrete details, and is held there. Iranian nerve, which we here begin to apprehend, mediates between the two forms of activity, the two worlds of thought and things, by a flash of living sympathy, by open and direct *rapport*. This is the condition of human progress. The Iranian mind, in its general sense, is thus the connecting bond, or transition, between the Oriental and Occidental worlds; and is traceable as such through all the phases of civilization, for the last two thousand years.

Note the substance of these cuneiform records of Chaldeo-Assyrian history. It is not contemplative; nothing like meditation or philosophic construction, scarcely any form of continuous intellectual development, appears in it. Nor is it realistic and positive, in the sense of dwelling on details or elaborating uses of things; of working for the pure love of work. It does not lose sight of the principle of causation, and that personal energy which is the ideal of causation, for mere interest in sequences and trains of palpable phenomena.

It is at once ideal and actual; the nerve which is neither mind alone, nor matter alone, but the passage of one into the other; the energy of impulse, — unconscious of self, unconscious of the results of action; conscious only of purpose, of rushing powers, of the inspiration of creative act,

of the victory of an all-absorbing aim. So earnest is this directness of impulse, that it constitutes the base of a religion, — a religion of marvellous historic power, which has been essentially the main factor of European faith hitherto. For what is the natural religious form of such a mental type? Not the worship of principles, not the worship of possessions; but the worship of personal Will. Its ideal is the conquering king, the royal god; the reduction of the whole world to the footstool of One, whose representative is the inspired chief or leader, the Master to whom every knee shall bend. What we shall find of most historic value in the study of these religious faiths which have been adopted by the West from the wonderful Semitic race, through the modifying influence of the Aryan to which properly the West belongs, is their common centre in the worship of personalities of one form or another. And of this religious development the earlier stages are palpable in the Chaldeo-Assyrian absorption in *will-power*. It is concrete will that first incarnates the worship of the Person. Then it passes on into forms of religious absolutism, — into monarchical exclusive gods of infinite power, and saviours whose undivided authority is veiled in spiritual conceptions and humanities, but whose churches dominate ages and races with barbarous tyrannies in the name of God, as absolute owner of mankind.

The principle is ever one and the same. It is in a Person that the religious sentiment is centred here, — just as in India it was in an idea; just as in China it was in an organization, secular and political. This also is a single phase of evolution; and future ages must see the personal element lose its exclusive sway over the mind of man, just as the merely abstract and the merely concrete have been already passed, and become merged in a completer form of the Ideal. For as mind aspired beyond its mere brain, or its mere muscle, so beyond its mere nerve which

binds them it evolves the harmonious form of integral man.

Our Assyrio-Chaldean study opens that intermediate Iranian phase of world-development which has now been stated. The question may well be asked, Why should it begin in Iran? The answer is, That although Iran is a geographical rather than an ethnic designation, yet the word, as I think, may fairly stand for a *function* as well, to which undoubtedly its geographical relations have largely contributed. This function, the reality of which must be shown in our proposed study of the races which have arisen within its limits, may here be very briefly stated, upon the strength of what the reader of these volumes may be supposed to know.

It was inevitable that when the isolation of races began to diminish on the open plateau of Iran, and centres of civilization were formed at the mouths of its great rivers, like the Mesopotamian, the friction of elements, the opportunities of commerce, the conflict of interests and faiths should awaken the sense of personal power and the aspiration to recognize and attain it. The wills of men became their master faculty. On the Turanian basis of material civilization arose the Semitic passion and exclusiveness; and in both, as later in the other races which swept in tides over the high plains and down the river bottoms, the desire of world-sway became far more intense than was possible either in China or Hindustan. In the conflict of strong passions thus stimulated, the power of will inevitably becomes the religious and moral ideal. The Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization is mainly characterized by the demand for some realization of this ideal, by masses who could not achieve it freely for themselves. It thus represents a very early phase in the growth of the religion of personal government. Not the *sense* of will-force, but the demand for it, was what produced those terrible kings

and their absolute sway. These great accumulations of human elements have no inward sense of unity, nor respect for law, except so far as it is embodied in the royal person and will. If the king dies, all are in revolt; the unorganized atoms are continually breaking away even in his lifetime. Always the sin charged on subject kings as *casus-belli* is that they have dared to refuse tribute, to deny allegiance. Here was forming, against all natural reluctance, by superior force of constructive will-power, the tremendous idea of the divine right of kings. And this was the foretype and crude primary condition of the corresponding force which created modern religions; nor can their relations to universal religion be understood without going back to the special line of human tendency of which they are the fulfilment. So we shall devote a chapter to the earliest form in which this power was exercised,— the influence of Babylon on Hebrew religion.

VI.

THE HEBREW AND THE CHALDEAN.

THE HEBREW AND THE CHALDEAN.

BABYLON has been called the "key of universal history." A claim so exclusive can of course have only a limited truth. The science of historical construction in our age finds a significance which cannot be measured in every human aspiration, and traces every individual current into the majestic tide of progress, to which it contributes some needed impulse. Nor can any moral instinct or principle of conduct be tracked to its human beginning in any one age, or locality, or person. Not only is it impossible to explore the origin of fetichism, polytheism, monotheism, pantheism, or the belief in incarnation or development, but not one of them can be explained or interpreted by any special set of influences, personal or institutional. Every effect was somehow contained in its cause; and to neglect the foregleams, the prophetic intimations, the unconscious or self-conscious tendencies which prove natural attractions to be slowly shaping the mind of man, is to forget that the whole human cosmos is implicated in every stage and step of human growth.

Yet it is true that there are crucial epochs, places, movements in history; nucleating points, nerve-ganglia as it were, where the collision and concentration of tendencies bring forth vast results for all time, and radiate light alike on past and future progress. Wonder and gratitude have successively transformed these centres into exclusive divine inlets, from whose supernatural gifts the whole world has its meaning and value. The progress of universal religion consists in finding that these in their turn are

explicable through other similar centres; that truth does not enter man by jets from without, but is slowly evolved through ages of growth; and that the only inspiration possible to man is his natural relation to the Infinite, as the substance of his own being, the never-ending progress of his ideal life. Natural sequence takes the place of supernatural interference and external will. A "chosen people" becomes simply a race endowed by the laws of genius and of inheritance, from its ancestral relations to other races, with special powers of moulding human history in a certain way. Bibles are found to be borrowers from older experiences, literatures rooted in unsuspected secular soils. The prophets are taught from the heart of humanity, and the "saviours" transmit the ancient torch of love. Under these laws of historic wholeness, the functions of races and of persons are special functions. And we now add the peculiar civilization of which Babylon was the type to those of India and China, as presented in previous volumes of this work, as another illustration of this truth.

The centre of Chaldeo-Assyrian consciousness was the king; and in this fact lies the secret of that special function which makes it possible to speak of Babylonian civilization as a "key of history." The Hindu throne was subject to religion as an absolute idea, incarnated in the absolutism of a priesthood. The Chinese throne was subject to organic civil and political law. The Chaldeo-Assyrian (first form of Iranian government) owns no allegiance but to personal will, which of itself represents Asshur or Bel,—"*I* reward and punish; *I* chastise heretics; *I* torture and ravage and tear down and massacre for my authority's sake. *I* bring the spoils into my palaces, and there I feast *my* gods; there I record my glories; there I repose and dwell for ever in my works; and whoso comes after me shall respect these and keep

them inviolate, or come under my curse." This, it will be seen, is but another Lord in the same line with Jahveh, Allah, and the Christian God of Judgment. It is the deified personal Will; the conscious Ego set in the roots of the universe, the monarchical element in religion. Nor is there in the whole series any essential difference of quality: the barbarous features which attend the conquering Ego of Nineveh being natural elements of exclusive will, and only partially transferred in the progress of civilization from material to spiritual spheres of sway. These devastating kings who condescend to no other notice of the rivals they overthrow than to record the lightning marches by which their cities were razed and burned, their treasures carried off, their people, men and women, enslaved, their fastnesses scaled, their goods heaped like corn to be destroyed, the horrible barbarities, which it is needless to repeat, inflicted on those that held out against the invader, eclipsing the occasional mercy shown those that submitted on his approach, — are paralleled in the history of English Puritanism, in the treatment of Ireland by the Church of England in the days of Elizabeth,[1] and in the whole history of witchcraft in modern Europe. They, too, are inspired by religious earnestness; they embody the exclusive rights of the omnipotent Will they worship; they come home to kneel before the Lady Ishtar, to pour out their tributes of spoils before the sun-god, and spare men's lives that they may learn the worship of their own established shrines.[2] Sayce maintains that they are shown by the monuments to have offered human sacrifices to Bel, and even to have given the name "the sacrifice of Bel" to the first month and zodiacal sign.[3] He also interprets expressions in the hymns as implying *vicarious*

[1] Lecky: *England in the Fourteenth Century*, vol. ii.
[2] *Records of the Past*, v. 17.
[3] *Biblical Archæology*, vol. iv. pt. i. pp. 25, 31.

sacrifice, though it may be early to accept this as historically certain. But is not the dogma of the Christian Church founded upon forms of both these atonements; and has not every religious war which that Church has waged against heretics been for the maintenance of these beliefs, and prosecuted with barbarities justified by the will of the Deity, as were the corresponding vicarious atonements to Jahveh or to Bel?

The Assyrian conquerors represent the ardent youth of this impulse to enthrone omnipotent will.

As yet there is no scientific sense of truth, no organized law of equity, no balance of powers controlling personal desire, to check it. And out of this consciousness of individual will, and its earliest religious form as allegiance to exclusive personalities, grew all the great Semitic faiths, mastering similar tendencies in the less intense Aryan, so as to have established themselves as recognized lords of revelation, creators of the religions of civilization; until the Aryan reaction in modern times has come to supplant the worship of all gods in the image — divine or human — of personal will, by immutable laws of the universe, and by developed intuitions of humanity.

And with these come the saving checks to this deeply-rooted anthropomorphic ideal, which assure the liberty of every individual to think, to doubt, to aspire, and to bring his personal will into obedient conformity with natural laws.

How far the Chaldeo-Assyrian, or rather Babylonian, world gives the key to universal history can only appear after tracing those later phases of its influence which open with the conquests of Cyrus, to the Jewish captivity, and ripen in the union of Eastern and Western civilizations through the conquests of Alexander of Macedon. But the period of the cuneiform records, already reviewed,

indicates it as the source of much that has long passed for isolated and special revelation to the Hebrew, or original invention by other races, Semitic or Aryan.

The ancestral land of Semitism, Northern as well as Southern, was probably Arabia. Canaan and Phœnicia were its sister provinces of great antiquity, but Babylon was its earliest school. Its gods, legends, and traditions, especially those of the Northern family, point in this direction, at least for their clearest expression. Its planetary worship, its sun-gods and moon-gods, and their close association with the sexual instincts, shown in androgynous deities, in goddesses riding on lions or oxen, and in the virile productivity of the bull; its terrible passion-gods of fire, the bloody rites of Moab and Ammon, the sacrifice of children to the Baals and Molochs, of virginity to the Astartes (Ishtars) and Beltises; its self-consuming frenzy of undisciplined desires, vibrating between sensual impulse and ascetic self-mutilation, — found typical developments in an Assyrio-Chaldean form as tendencies more or less universal in the whole family, but imperfectly organized in the West, and by tribes less influenced than the Eastern Semites by Turanian industry and culture. They are, however, associated with the seven Cabiri, everywhere the expressions of agriculture and other toil, with renovation through the fires of energy. They were all expressions of that absolutism of will, that worship of all-mastering personal purpose, whose god in Assyria was military omnipotence, whose passion for self-gratification an all-consuming flame. Yet another and still older form of the same ideal was the thirst to seize new worlds of physical resources beyond the sea, embodied in the fish-gods of the Chaldean and Phœnician coasts, the adoration of oceanic productivity, and in the commercial ambition of Babylon and Tyre. These gods of Nature's productivity, instinct with life, with all vital relations and powers, had in all those cults similar

names and toils. The wanderings of Baal-Melkarth, Tyrian god of cities, were the prototype of the Greek Herakles, and closely associated with the mythic history of this grand embodiment of heroic will, who carries us back also not only to the sun-gods of Asia Minor,[1] but beyond these to Assyrian customs and beliefs.[2] In all the Greek heroic wanderings and labors, east and west, there is everywhere a strong Semitic element in the ardor which thus followed the victorious march of the Sun through the heavens, picturing his hourly struggles with monsters harmful to man, till he reaches his martyrdom of fire in the glowing west, burning himself in his own flames, to rise again on the morrow. The whole conception of the myth is Semitic. It is characterized, like those of the Lydian Sandon, the Assyrian Sardanapalus, the Hebrew Samson, and the Phœnician Dido, by the thoroughly Semitic idea of a tragic death of the god or hero through his association with the other sex. The service of Omphale in feminine dress and the fatal tunic of Dejanira, which bring the doom of Herakles, the fall of Epimetheus through the box of Pandora, are foreshadowed by earlier Assyrian, Phœnician, and other myths of divine men who fell under the dominion of women, or assumed their garb and habits, to their own ruin.[3] In the Assyrian festival of the Sakæ, a slave was made to play the king, allowed the freedom of the harem, dressed in women's garments, and finally put to death. The myth of Dionysus, as well as that of Herakles, goes back to Chaldeo-Assyrian Semitism, where Dian-nisi is the Sun in his whole life, death, and resurrection, interpreted by the extremes of human pas-

[1] Especially the Lydian Sandon.

[2] Movers: *Die Phönizier*, i. 458. Oppert: *Etudes Assyriennes*, p. 181. Maury: *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce*, iii. 152, 240. Hartung: *Die Religion und Mythologie der Griechen*, iv. 202, 203. Schwenck: *Mythologie der Semiten*, pp. 277–318. Duncker: *Gesch. Alterth.*, i. 154.

[3] Hartung: *Die Religion und Mythologie der Griechen*, iv. 202–204. As Ninus and Semiramis, Sardanapalus and his harem.

sion, by orgies of grief and joy. The women whom Ezekiel[1] describes as weeping for Tammuz at Jerusalem were, — in part at least, — drawn from his Babylonian experience. Tam-zi, "the sun of life," or "morning sun," beloved by Ishtar (Ashtôreth), queen of heaven, is Dian-nisi in his radiant youth. He passes into night of the day or of the year, and the earth pines and fails for grief. Ishtar, who is reproached as the wanton cause of his death,[2] descends to the underworld, probably to seek him, though this reason is not given, and finds there the water of immortality. This idea of immortality is forever associated with these lessons of the dying year.[3] But this worship of Tammuz (the Syrian Adonis) in fact goes back in Canaan or Syria, as well as in all western Asia, to the old Byblos cult, primitive beyond all discovery,— type of summer bloom, as parched and torn to death by the wild boar of drought, as of so many like forms, representing the religious agonies and ecstasies of ancient worship. Adonis had been consigned by Aphrodite, his divine mistress, who corresponds to Ishtar, to the care of Persephone in the underworld, part of which fate was remitted by Zeus, but nothing could forefend the cruel death to come. So Demeter, Earth-mother of the Greeks, treats her beautiful Kore (the spring-time) in like manner, and then descends to hades in search of her, while the world mourns. This widespread myth of the *dying god* for whom Nature pines, and the Mænad howls and tears her hair, and Love descends to death to win him back is, in this special form at least, of Semitic origin, a gift of Assyrio-Chaldean Dian-nisi, — prototype, or rather germ-notion, of redemption through death and resurrection of the just man, as a basis of theological creeds. Equally Semitic is the tendency of

[1] Ezek. viii. 14.
[2] See Assyrian Texts (*Records of the Past*, i. 141).
[3] Sayce (*Biblical Archæology*. iii. p. 168).

this tragic fatality to take the form of suicide,—the natural reaction and irony of uncontrollable will. The illustration is to be seen in most of the myths already specified, where that inevitable fall comes through some fatal mastery in what is one's own, which outward forces alone could not effect. Just as the frenzy of passion is represented as driving to self-mutilation the rage of Mænads in their Bacchic rites,[1] so these gods and heroes of Semitic mythology, whether Assyrian, Hebrew, Phœnician, or Greek, build their own funeral pyres, or pull down temples on their own heads, or burn themselves under their own treasures, or cut off their own heads, like their prototype Bel-Merodach of Babylon. Even the best must be sacrificed, because life was the gift and power of God himself and man's highest possession, and the greatest must give the life of his dearest ones and his own. These are the terrible fires of Semitic faith, the first fountains of its bloody atonements, and its sacrifices of the "first-born" and the "only-begotten" to omnipotent will; frenzied dualism of the productive and destructive passions, which resulted in the Dualism of its more refined and spiritual religions. The sun is its symbol, — the sun, not as centre and source and static lawgiver of the universe, but as active, instant mastery; as tremendous energy of determination, intensity of desire, and exclusiveness of claim. This is Assyria, this is Semitized Babylon.

The Phœnician cosmogony is also a grand play of imagination with successive personalities, male and female. In the Babylonian and Phœnician cosmogonies alike,[2] the shaping power of the cosmos is *desire* acting on a preexisting subject mass; in the Hebrew, the idea of *purpose* in the brooding "Breath" (*rûach*) is equally personal. Their chaos, preceding creation, is itself alive with pro-

[1] These are originally Semitic.
[2] Berosus and Sanchoniathon.

digious half-shaped forms struggling for power, and the constructive creator must put them under by superior will. Not like the Hindu world-maker, by pure thought, nor like the Chinese, by pure work, does the Semite bring things to being; but by commandment of will, by the very passion of *life*,—the giving forth of it in its wholeness, whether by word of Elôhîm or by suicide of Bel. So did he put his soul *into* the senses, his impulses into unbridled masterships, his ideals into the all-consuming cosmic fires. And the impetus of this towering and aggressive will, self-abandoned to deified passions, has made him a controlling factor in the religious history of the last two thousand years. And of this historic power Babylon is the opening key. Let us note how far Hebrew religion was traceable to Chaldeo-Assyrian influences.

Ur, the traditional home of the Abrahamite family, now identified with Mugheir, was an important city of the Chaldees (possibly *Surippak*, the centre of Accadian literature), and is represented on the tablets as the most Turanian of the twenty cities of the Euphrates valley.[1] And still further back, the ancestors of Abraham are connected with Arphaxad, the "neighborhood of the Chaldeans."[2] This filiation of the Hebrews with the Chaldeans is confirmed by the close relation of their earliest customs with those recorded in Accadian inscriptions,—such as divination by clouds,[3] by trees, as exemplified in the burning bush;[4] by dreams of seers, by evocation of the dead, the very name of familiar spirits (*ôbôth*) being Accadian;[5] by the serpent, a Turanian type of wisdom and power. The worship of the heavenly host on Hebrew high places allies itself to the ziggurats (high towers) of the Chaldean cities; the planetary number

[1] Sayce's Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 318. Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 339.

[2] Genesis, x.

[3] Leviticus, xix. 26; Deuteronomy, xviii. 10; 2 Kings, xxi. 6; Isaiah, ii. 6; Micah, v. 11.

[4] Lenormant: *Divination*, etc., p. 86.

[5] Ibid., p. 162.

seven, made sacred by the Hebrews in their creative week before they conceived of connecting it with Jahveh's rest,[1] is Assyrian. The prophylactic images of gods (*terâphîm*), of which the Urim and Thummin were probably forms, had their prototypes in Accadian magic.[2] So witchcraft and sorcery; and so demonic possession, exorcisms, the Sabbath, and the cherubim, which are simply the winged human-headed bull of the Chaldean sculptures.[3]

Previous to these Assyrian relations, however, must be recognized the Canaanite origin of much in Hebrew tradition and life. The name El, for example, as a general appellation of God, was a part of their Canaanite heritage. Phœnician mythology, as we have it in the fragments of Sanchoniathon, has so many points of closest resemblance to the Genesis-legend that the common origin of these traits in Canaanite tribal association is unmistakable. These fragments seem to concern only the older and native Phœnician traditions,—that is the Canaanite. We note not only the striking similarity in the story of creation, but the common stories of giant-races and their wars, the enmity of brothers, and other analogies, among which not the least striking is the common name of the "Most High God" (*Ėl-'elyôn*).[4] "Jehovah," says Robertson Smith, "was never a Canaanite God, and the roots of the popular religion were in the acknowledgment of Jehovah as Israel's God, and of the duty of national service to Him, which is equally the basis of Mosaic orthodoxy." But here it seems to me is a confusion between the original germ and the powerful development it received from the national spirit.[5]

There can hardly be a doubt that Jahveh was originally one of those sun-gods in whom all Semitic worship was

[1] Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, i. pp. 236-264.
[2] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 45.
[3] Lenormant: *Fragm. Cosmog.*, p. 78.
[4] Cory: *Ancient Fragm.* (Hodges), pp. 1-22.
[5] *Lectures on the Old Testament*, pp. 231, 423, note.

wont to centre. Leader of the stars, Jahveh of hosts, institutor of the sacred planetary number in rites and traditions, a "consuming fire," a flame that none could look upon and live, — he cannot be separated from that very numerous class of local deities of whom Melchizedek, El, Baal, and Moloch were the general Canaanite representatives.

These names were not distinctively personal, but meant merely lord or king, — a mighty one. There was found nothing incongruous in combining his worship with theirs. Elôhîm, one of their generic names, "the mighty ones," was adopted in the early national legends, and retained in their later elaborations as the class-name to express the personality of Jahveh; and Jahveh-Elôhîm was in common use.[1] All these gods were worshipped alike on the high-places (*bâmôth*),[2] and a tree, symbol of Asherah, was placed beside their altars. The Jahvites worshipped before upright stones and columns (*matstsêbôth*), and also images of the sun (*chammânîm*).[3] Solomon's Jahvism built tabernacles to Milcom, Chemosh, Astarte. In both kingdoms of Israel and Judah,[4] as well as through the earlier periods of the Judges, this intermixture of rites was common among the Jahvites;[5] and in the days of elaborated priestly rule it was strenuously prohibited by law.[6] Hosea tells us that Ephraim was given over to the Baal calf-worship;[7] and especially ascribes this anti-national conduct to the influence of Assyria.[8] It all resulted in Ezekiel's tremendous indictment of the idolatry of Jerusalem, as late as the exile! It is to Jahveh that Jephthah vows to sacrifice his daughter.[9] It is at Jahveh's command that David hangs up the sons of Saul,[10] and Samuel

[1] Exodus, iii. 15.
[2] 1 Samuel, ix. x.; Ezekiel, xx. 28.
[3] Kuenen, i. 24.
[4] 1 Kings, xi. xv. 14; xvi. 14; xxiii. 43.
[5] Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, i. 302, 303; 350–355; 80, 81.
[6] Leviticus, xviii. 21.
[7] Hosea, viii. 6; xiii. 1, 4.
[8] Hosea, vii. 11; xii. 1.
[9] Judges, xi. 30.
[10] 2 Samuel, xxi. 1–14.

hews Agag in pieces.[1] By Jahveh, as well as by every other form of Moloch, the life of a first-born is claimed. Abraham's offering of Isaac, in the myth, though prevented by miracle, at least implies and inculcates willingness to serve Jahveh in that way, as acceptable service; and this very spirit is blessed by Jahveh with the covenant of seed.[2] The dedication of men by *Chêrem*, however, not to be redeemed from death, was an offering to Jahveh as punishment, not as tribute.[3]

It is evident from these hints how difficult it was for Jahvism to throw off its early associations with those consuming fire-gods in which Semitism embodied the absolute claims of omnipotent Will. And all these traits of sun-worship belong to its Assyrian descent.[4] Adrammelech (fire-king), adored at Sepharvaim in Mesopotamia,[5] to whom men "burned their sons," is a fair type of these gods of Western Asia, from Chaldea to the borders of Egypt. The sun and fire worship of the Aryan, as we shall see, was of another order.

If, as is charged by the prophet,[6] the Hebrews in the desert adored Chiun (the planet Saturn), while Jahveh was their guiding God; if, as is certain, "in the patriarchal age they accepted as sacred all the places the Canaanites held sacred (trees, mountains, fountains, stones), and the intercourse was still closer after the return from Egypt,"[7] — it is reasonable to believe that their worship of Jahveh grew out of a similar circle of religious conceptions.

Whether the name was introduced by Moses,[8] on the Elôhîm's announcing for the first time that they were Jahveh, — in other words, by substituting a more distinctly monotheistic term for deity, — or was borrowed

[1] 1 Samuel, xv. 33.
[2] Genesis, xxii. 16.
[3] See Kuenen, i. 291; Leviticus, xxvii. 28.
[4] See Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 228.
[5] 2 Kings, xvii. 31.
[6] Amos, v. 26.
[7] Renan: *Langues Sémitiques*, p. 110.
[8] Exodus, vi. 3.

from some desert tribe with whom the Hebrews came in contact;[1] whether it already existed in Assyrian mythology, and is to be associated with the Phœnician Jao, or is a pure creation of the prophets of the eighth century before Christ, — it is certain that the Jahveh or Jahveh-Elôhîm of the Prophets, in whose interest the whole literature of the Hebrew books has been worked over, is a product of slow growth, and by no means entered full-born into the Hebrew consciousness.

His final elevation to a far higher level than the surrounding deities, and the renunciation of their worship as idolatry, in favor of one who had created all nations and made the world his footstool, was a prophetic ideal of the eighth century before Christ and onwards; but it was made possible only by the partial nationalization of religion through earlier periods of Hebrew history. This lifting of a national god into a universal Creator and Ruler had its stages, — just as the old aspiration of the Assyrian kings to put all other gods under the feet of their own Asshur by conquest of the nations, and thoroughly to absorb the worship of all other tribes in themselves as his representatives, was a long and necessary step towards monotheism, and prepared the way for receiving its maturer form through the Persian worship of Ormuzd.[2] It is an indispensable condition to the attainment of unity in the religious idea of a people, that they should become powerfully organized as a whole, and aim at unlimited power as a national ideal. As the child's first idea of supreme authority is the law he finds in his parents, so in races the authority of the national ruler, considered as a universal claim, is the starting point of belief in one definite personal God above all gods, or exclusive of them. Nor can there be any doubt that the positive Jahvistic theism of the Hebrews was coincident in time with the

[1] Theile.

[2] See *Yaçna*, i. 1; xix. 37; xliii. 3, 7; xliv. i. 1.

bloom of Hebrew nationality in the ages following those of David and Solomon,[1] — just as the struggles of the nation for existence, in later times, ripened that Messianic idea in which Jahveh came to his most exalted form.[2] In the same way, out of the sense of a separate national personality, will, and destiny, grew up the reverence for the one national God as *holy*. This word (*kâdôsh*) in later times, the highest term for moral and spiritual purity, was constantly applied to Jahveh, in its natural sense of separated, exalted, unapproachable, isolated, in correspondence with distinct national existence and purpose. The one was the matrix and nurse of the other.[3] When we read such phrases as "the Holy One of Israel," we must remember that the idea of contrast with other national gods, — that is, of Egypt, Phœnicia, Edom, etc., — was always present with the writer; and that the *moral* allegiance implied in it had its foundation and force in this sense of a community of relation, origin, purpose, aim, in the nation as a whole. From beginning to end, Jahveh was indeed more or less God of the Hebrews; every saint, patriarch, genealogy, conquest, law, temple, prophecy, has its authority more and more in the service it pays to the national destiny. It is because the religious and national ideals thus reached form and sustain each other, that we find such tremendous persistency in Hebrew faith, and such absorption of this race in itself as the chosen of God. This intense local concentration of Will has nourished a commanding self-confidence, and the world has naturally, not supernatu-

[1] In the earlier legislation of the *Tôrâh*, as seen in the Book of Exodus, a free worship at local shrines, unknown to later times and mixed with Canaanite traditions and rites, made such national unity impossible. But what are called the "Middle Books" of the Law, dating from the reforming kings, show the vigorous effort to counteract this want of religious nationality, by which the great kings fell into Baal-worship, through legislative institutions like those of Deuteronomy. But not till the exile, whose results are seen in Leviticus, was religion genuinely nationalized.

[2] Goldziher: *Mythology among the Hebrews*, p. 272.

[3] Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, i. 43.

rally, yielded to its religious sway. It has furnished the leading type of monotheism so far for Western nations in its ideal of absolute personal Will. It has thus become in the religious sphere what the Assyrian kings were in the political or military. Christianity, its offspring, held obediently to its literature and prophetic inspiration, even after theology had advanced far beyond its national limitations. The development of nationality was by no means easy. The Hebrews were a mixed people — half Arab, half Canaanite — for centuries, and their special Law (*tôrâh*) was a slow evolution, but by singularly natural stages, largely from these elements. There was in fact a remarkable absence of break in this process where all has been imagined to be miraculous; and nothing can so perfectly refute the miraculous theory as the manner in which each stage in Hebrew legislation interlocks with the preceding, from the oldest covenants and simplest free usages on through the Deuteronomic and then to the post-exilian Levitical institutions. Never till the latest epochs had the Hebrews a recognized religious law. The national god had no constitutional support or statute. The influences of the Babylonian exile, as already shown in a previous chapter, were the culminating force to this result, ending in the popular consecration of religion to nationality. In the great meetings called by Nehemiah[1] and Ezra after the return from Babylon, the earlier migration covenanted to build a State and establish Jahveh in the centre of his people on a throne of historical laws.

The early aspirations of the Hebrews after a tribal god are the substance of the Mosaic tradition as now worked over in the Old Testament books. They furnish the key to their Abrahamic call and covenant, to their Exodus epos, to their exchange of the more generic name Elôhîm for that of Jahveh, as sign of unity, supremacy, holiness.

[1] See Nehemiah, x. 29. Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, ii 229

It was as natural for them as for the other tribes, all of whom had their local divinities, and all were mixed in the Hebrew mind. It is difficult to describe a process, each step of which has been covered by the succeeding one, and by the reconstruction of ideas, traditions, and literature in a new interest, down to the great reconstruction of the traditions and laws into the Levitical institutions by Ezra and the other priestly scribes, from 538 to 458 B. C., under the influence of the Babylonian exile, and brought to Judea by him at the latter date.

But we may specially note the great — later, I cannot but think — recognized significance of the name *Jahveh*, "He that is," with a future as well as present force; in other words, simply *the real God*, as contrasted with all other national gods, who were rejected because held to be false. It is obvious that the original selection of this term did not imply positive monotheism nor exalted purity; but it was well fitted, in the developed use of it, to imply the concentration of thoroughly earnest minds on truth. Here was a germ of moral allegiance, which promised, in Semitic hands, to press forward into passionate rejection of that indifference to contrasts of name and quality which inheres in polytheism. In the higher minds at least, it would be developed into an intense hatred for the unconscious immoralities of old Semitic worship. The moral exaltation of Hebrew prophecy, that grandest gift of Semitism to the human race, was thus in some measure foreshadowed by the Hebrew tribes in their earliest conscious acts of free religious choice. It was not, as Robertson Smith would argue, a supreme proof "that the Old Testament religion is no mere natural variety of Semite monolatry, but a dispensation of the true and eternal religion of the spiritual God."[1] It is a perfectly natural Semitic development. They did not stand in the "secret counsel of Jehovah," —

[1] *Lectures on Old Testament*, p. 273.

there is no such secret counsel. They did what idealists do on given conditions. The full ripening and purification of that noble germ was very gradual. The Jahveh of the later Isaiah was no immediate inspiration of unity and holiness. He grew (as we have already shown) from a beginning not essentially different from the Asshur of Assyria or the Chaldean Adrammelech. His palpable associations were with the solar fires, the destroying and productive forces of Nature, vitalized with conscious purpose, omnipotent to create or to kill, knowing no impulse towards the disobedient but to exterminate them,[1] and specially determined in his volition by the peculiar fortunes of the Hebrews in Egypt and Canaan, as well as by the free traditional worship on the high places practised by the tribes to a comparatively late period. Made thoroughly earnest by tribal sufferings and the extremes of desire and defeat, they gradually shook free their ideal from these material investments, and made it at once a supreme personality and a righteous law. But through every subsequent phase it never escapes that first anthropomorphic, arbitrary meaning of Jahveh, — a conscious Will, dividing right from wrong, determining the true, rejecting and destroying the false, with two-edged sword, rewarding obedience and punishing disobedience in ways of its own choosing. This institution of morality and holiness by force of an omnipotent Will is just as true of the Christ of the Last Judgment as of the Jahveh of the Exodus and the Asshur of the Ninevite kings.

The phases of this natural evolution were determined by the national destinies. The God of Amos, as of the later Isaiah, was an outgrowth of secular causes, a product of the whole history of Hebrew relations with the human race. Whatever cultivated their sense of nationality, those Semitic instincts of personal and tribal will, of

[1] Genesis, vi. 7.

exclusiveness in the claim of authority and in the sense of devotion, went to the formation of the religious ideal. Its roots therefore are in Canaanite as well as Chaldean soil, and the parallel strata there show the universality of this rule. That seething mixture of humanity and barbarism in the old Hebrew laws and life was analogous to the combination of military frenzy and industrial ardor in the Assyrio-Babylonian world. And that majesty of righteous law which bowed the souls of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jesus, and inspired their immortal protests against the vice and formalism of their times, came slowly in the fires of spiritual experience out of the primal concentrated aim to find a separate tribal god. In this began the sense of *holiness*. For separateness meant inviolability; in other words, reverence, awe, authority of conscience, and faith. The same word (*kâdôsh*) signifies *apart*, and *holy*. And that aloofness, which was at first the symbol of tribal pride and ambition, became a *purity*, which spurned the pretences of formal piety and the pride of human tyrannies, and hastened with impartial thunders to the help of the weak and oppressed.[1] Thus the petty passions of undisciplined and roving clans are slowly transformed into universalities of immortal principle. Such is spiritual evolution. Not mere creation of the greater by the less, but the implication of natural intuition, the sacred sense of obligation, the cosmic unsearchable beauty and order in every step of growth.

Nor is the transformation at an end. Even the highest forms of thought and feeling in Hebrew experience, as in that of other early races, were very crude stages of this implication. They were conceived as external revelations, words of Jahveh spoken to his prophets or his people, and through them to mankind. A divine Will,

[1] So the purity of Ahura in the Avesta is most conspicuous in his abhorrence of sin. *Yaçna*, xxxi. 13.

analogous to their human ideal, a voluntary choice between two opposites, a distinctly conceived motive and purpose, impressing itself on man as an instrument, were posited outside man and the world as the ultimate source of truth and ground of righteousness. This personal relation was so intensely conceived by the Hebrew prophets, that their language assumed them to be under a divine possession, and took the form of a religious and moral absolutism, imposing enough to bring all civilizations to their feet. But, overwhelming as they are to the anthropomorphic instinct, these conceptions have always ignored the direct participation of human nature itself in all the truth and right it is cognizant of, and the impossibility of receiving either the one or the other form of experience from a Will outside of the nature of things and of man. To suppose such a Will, selecting definite methods of education for a special people, and communicating these to chosen instruments, not through experience or study, but by direct influx, was but a Semitic exaggeration or extreme form, though primary, of what has always been, and still is, the popular idea of religious truth. For the notion of personal commandment is here intensified by its connection with the passion for national unity, expressed by a central theocratic ruler, and his extension to world-sway. It was the natural theistic instinct of the Hebrews that made them insist on having a king; an instinct which a troop of judges or seers could not satisfy. The Semitic God is the divinized king, and when lifted above all earthly kings is the king still; holy because separate, and awful in the power to do, not as he ought, but as he wills. This is the Hebrew theocracy, so potent in its persistence in the Christian church. I have no doubt that monotheism is, as a rule, reached through tribal or national consciousness, and that Hebrew and Semitic history herein represents a decisive phase in the history of mankind.

In thus ascribing monotheism in a large degree to a political experience, I do not discredit what is called the intuition of God, which in fact merely takes its conditions therefrom. This intuition cannot properly be defined as teaching any special form of deity; it is simply the perception of substance as higher than phenomena, and as necessary to their existence, and associates itself more and more with the intuition of duty, holiness, right, without which no conception of God can exist. Its highest form is the result of the deepest religious and philosophical culture. For this reason, no conception of a personal voluntary agent, apart from the universe, can finally satisfy it. Substance, as inscrutable and indefinable, the infinite reality that underlies all order, beauty, goodness, and contains all intelligence, all principles and laws, is thus, properly speaking, the universal significance of the intuition of God. To this highest form Semitism, in its great religions, does not consciously attain, however it be involved in their logical evolutionary necessities, as in those of all other great faiths of mankind. Not more in the Old Testament of the Hebrews than in the tablets of Asshur, is this pure conception of deity found. The New Testament religion is also worship of a personal Will; a pure monotheism. It is anthropomorphic, and creates a God in human form outside of and above humanity; and, although bringing this God into closer relations with individual feelings and freedom than the older faith from which it grew, does not pursue unity or holiness as an ideal with more ardor than did the Hebrew nationality, which required the surrender of all private desires to an all-embracing sovereign Will, separate in its personality from the human soul.

It is in tracing this passion for national unity in its religious expression, that we learn the vast indebtedness of the Hebrews for their whole religious development to

the stimulus of those foreign nationalities which they regarded as its foes. The legends in Genesis, which purport to give the earliest history of mankind, are palpably shaped by a purpose to identify the passions of Israel with the will of Jahveh as maker and governor of the world. In this marvellous series the sovereign claims of the chosen people are affirmed, and their destiny fixed from the beginning by the Supreme Cause of all things. In the oldest portions there linger polytheistic hints and traditions,[1] and there are marks of spontaneous poetic faith which indicate an early origin. But with the crude exclusiveness of the tribe are combined elements of universality, — a conception of history as a whole, a direct recognition of other nations, and of a common origin and interest for all mankind; an effort to deal, in a simple half-conscious way, indeed, with the problems of social order, of human relations, of life and death, with the law of national retribution and the sense of a secular providence, which can only be explained by the action of some great force in various ways developing and counteracting the primitive instincts and desires. This was Babylon, where the old national traditions were worked up, during the Captivity, under the stress of national sorrows and reviving hopes, amidst a vast concourse of nations (πάμμικτος ὄχλος), their collision of interests, commercial, industrial, military, and their cosmopolitan experience. Here the earnest theism of Persia and its large toleration not only permitted the Hebrew exiles to study their own fortunes and those of the human race in quietness of mind, but even stimulated their productive faculty to the great task

[1] The latest Biblical studies prove conclusively that the present form, and in large degree the substance, of the Genesis stories, the special Levitical legislation and the historical books, — in short, the body of the Pentateuch, — is the result of elaboration and construction during and after the exile. But these historical studies of portions of the text are not our main reliance. The more primal origin of the whole series is equally obvious. Earlier borrowing from Babylonian, as well as Canaanite and Phœnician, must explain the basis of these legends. Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, ii. 159-168.

of literary and religious construction, never before fairly undertaken. But besides bearing an important part in the final shaping of the Genesis myths, Assyria and Chaldea were in large degree the sources of their earlier forms.

The Hebrews themselves conceded to Babylon an immense antiquity, as the city of Nimrod,[1] in the third generation after Noah.[2] It is inferred from the cuneiform inscriptions that a scientific astronomy centred there two thousand years before Christ,[3] resting on the zodiac, the division of the great circle into three hundred and sixty degrees, and all the large and small divisions of time known to us, — the planetary week, the gnomon, the solar and lunar years.[4] According to Diodorus, the Babylonian had conceived of the world as an established divine order, and as regulated by guardian powers, each in his station, planetary or stellar.[5] It is obvious that no comparatively rude race like the Hebrew could have come into close relations with a civilization so ancient and so ripe, without drawing largely on its fund of traditional beliefs. Here indeed we find the cradle of Semitism; the natural key to those imaginative Hebrew myths which have been regarded as the gift of an inspired race to the religious nature of man.[6]

The Genesis story of creation gives a divine authority to the Hebrew Sabbath as the day of rest for the national God after six days creative work.[7] This is manifestly the motive of the distinctive Hebrew legend, which in many respects grew out of the vast elaboration of the Sabbatic idea by the priestly legislation after the exile, though of

[1] Genesis, x. 10.

[2] Carré: *L'Ancien Orient*, ii. 445.

[3] Lenormant: *Essai de commentaire des fragments cosmogoniques.*

[4] Lenormant: *Manual of Ancient History of the East*, ii. 185.

[5] Carré: *L'Ancien Orient*, ii. 469, 470.

[6] It is only in accord with its whole history that the Jewish people have concentrated their highest traditional respect on the Babylonian Gemara (or Commentary on the Mishnah) instead of the Jerusalem. Wünsche: *Der Talmud.*

[7] Genesis, i. 1; ii. 3.

course the Hebrew Sabbath is not due to this alone, being of far earlier origin.[1] But the division of days by sevens is far older than the Hebrew Sabbath. It belongs to the earliest fund of religious traditions. It is not founded on any recurrent period in the order of Nature, yet it is not arbitrary, still less mystical.[2] It is a part of that primitive astronomy which was the infantile unity of science and faith, and appears on a gigantic scale in all the cosmogonies of antiquity. The central figures in this cultus of the stars are the five planets, with the sun and moon, observable among all the heavenly host by their relative change of place and apparent specialty of function. They were symbolized by the seven stages of the Babylonian and Assyrian *ziggurat*, or towered temple; in the seven walls of Babylon, and in the seven days of the week, the seventh day being consecrated as a day of release from labor. An old Accadian calendar,[3] probably of the seventeenth century before Christ, gives the special festival for every day, the seventh being always designated as a Sabbath (*Sabattu*); on which the king himself shall not change his garments, nor ride, nor sacrifice, till night, nor even administer the government. From this royal rest appropriated by the Semitic races of Chaldea, it was but a step in the intenser anthropomorphism of the Hebrews to make their own God the example of Sabbatic release, and to pronounce it as his command. The second Jahvistic account of creation[4] has more signs of antiquity and originality than the other, and is referred by Kuenen to a possibly earlier period than the exile; but on doubtful grounds. In the Chaldean cosmogony, as reported by Berosus,[5] in the Phœnician of Sanchoni-

[1] Kuenen; *Religion of Israel*, ii. 280.

[2] See Philo's absurd reasons for a supposed sanctity in the number seven. Vol. i. chap. xxx.-xliii.

[3] *Records of the Past*, vii. 157.

[4] Genesis, ii. 4, *et seq.*

[5] Time of Alexander. Berosus drew his account from ancient sources, and his fragments are preserved in Polyhistor, Arbydenus, and Eusebius.

athon, and in the cuneiform inscription, which is now believed to be Assyrian and not Accadian, the beginning of things is the formless chaos, full of incomplete germs and half-made creatures, — *Tiamat* (*Tiamtu* of the Assyrians, *Tauthe* of Damascius, *Thalatta* of Berosus) meaning the sea in the sense of abyss. The Hebrew expression for this first material of the world is *Tehôm*, the same word as *Tiamat*, and characterized as without form and void. Compare the first sentence of the Genesis story with the cuneiform Creation-tablets:[1] —

"When above were not raised the heavens, and below on the earth a plant had not grown, and the bounds of the abyss had not been opened, the chaos of waters was the producing mother of all things. And the waters were gathered into one place. But a tree had not grown: a flower had not unfolded, when the gods had not yet sprung up, and order did not exist. . . . Then were made the great gods. All that was done by the great gods was delightful [very good] to them.[2]

"He (Anu) constructed constellations, like figures of animals (zodiac); by them dividing the year into twelve months: planets also for rising and setting ("signs"). Wandering stars to shine, harmless, in their courses. He made the gates strong, right and left. He set the moon to rule the night. . . . And the sun arose in glory."

The lunar phases are perhaps described, yet in a passage extremely obscure;[3] while in another connection there is recorded the institution of the Sabbath,[4] though we know from other sources that the seven-day week and Sabbath rest are really Accadian institutions for kings and people.[5] The close resemblance between this very ancient cosmogony and its Hebrew analogue is broken by the single circumstance that it symbolizes the steps of creation by successive pairs of male and female powers, and seeks

[1] *Records of the Past*, ix. 167.
[2] Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis.* In Sayce's edition (1880) a different translation is given, p. 57.
[3] Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis* (Sayce), pp. 64, 65.
[4] Ibid., p. 308.
[5] Ibid., p. 89.

to express their stability rather than any special order of production. The successive steps of creation, of which so much has been made by the harmonists, are not very well made out, and their enumeration by days I find myself unable to recognize at all as yet.[1] The account, so far as it is rightly interpreted, may however, as Sayce suggests,[2] rest on older traditions; and although of comparatively late Assyrian, not Accadian, origin, it is certainly older than the present form of the Hebrew story. But a fragment, now missing, is believed to have described the emergence of light, atmosphere, land, and plants.

Finally, man appears, created by Hea, and is commanded to worship daily in fear of his Maker.

"That they might obey (?), he has created mankind; the merciful one with whom is life. May he establish and never may his word be forgotten in the mouth of the black-headed race whom his hands created."

"May he also remove mischief; may he overcome it for the future. Because all places he made, he pierced, he strengthened. Lord of the world is his name, called even Father Bel. The names of the angels he gave to them."

"With friend and comrade speech thou makest. In the underworld speech thou makest to the propitious genii. When thou speakest also he will give."[3]

What we must specially notice is that the Chaldean account, as at once combining in one system many primitive elements of belief which do not appear in the Hebrew, and resting upon ideas which could not possibly have been evolved from the Genesis story, is obviously more original, while the Hebrew is its adaptation to the

[1] Of the hypothetic number of tablets, only four have been discovered, of which that called the seventh is so called only provisionally; and those conjectured to be the second and third are in the highest degree doubtful, to the uninitiated eye certainly, affording no evidence whatever of the special-creation works the translators have found in them. (Sayce's Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 62, 63.) The first ascribes the generation of heaven and earth to "the boundless deep," "the chaos of the sea," conceived as a female, and before the existence of the gods themselves. Ibid., pp. 57, 58.

[2] Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 22.

[3] Ibid. (Sayce), p. 73–78.

supremacy of the national God. In Semitic cosmogonies, as given by Berosus and others, the water is the first material of creation. The Phœnician and Hebrew "deep" was a waste abyss over which wandered the wind, or breath. So Chaldean and Phœnician civilization began with amphibious deities, having fish heads above the man's; and the probably Semitic-Polynesian myth makes the father of gods and men fish up the earth from the sea.[1] It is obvious that such beliefs as these point to centres of civilization on the seashore. The intimation is confirmed by numerous records going to show that the shores of the Erythræan Sea were the great point of departure for civilized Semitism. But the cosmogonies which begin from ocean as a chaotic abyss, containing the germs of things, rest on a wider basis than any such special geographical location. They are found among mountain tribes as well, and at the root of Aryan as well as Semitic mythology, and even of the oldest philosophies. Their ocean is the brooding atmosphere of space, conceived as preceding the gathering of all floating seeds of life into a living world,[2] the appointment of planetary courses, and the orderly voyage of the Sun scattering the powers of life and growth around him as he moves. Even here water plays an important part. The interest is mainly centred in the conflict of the lightning or the sunbeam with the piled and rolling raincloud, — the storm-struggle which opens the mysterious storehouse of waters hidden in the black roaring deeps. As Indra slays "the enveloping" (Vṛitra) serpent in the writhing clouds in Hindu mythology, as Tistrya fights the demon Apaosha and expels him from the great sea Vouru-kasha, and Thraê-

[1] Fornander: *The Polynesian Race*, p. 63.

[2] Eckstein (*Les Sources de la Cosmogonie de Sanchoniathon*) has explored this field. Berosus' Chaldean cosmogony traces all things back to Thalatta or Tiamat, containing forms of mixed creatures, — a semi-scientific recognition of evolution and progress from the crude and confused forms of life to higher beauty.

tona slays Dahâka, both dragons in Iranian, — as Apollo pierces the Python in Greek, — so Bel divides in two the Serpent (Tiamat), queen of the Chaldean Chaotic Sea. The association of vast resource and far-reaching expansion with roaring and rolling waters is as natural for pastoral as for littoral tribes. Space and sea are equally parents of these amazing fertilizers and producers; and similar names and legends would be associated with these infinitudes of living power.[1]

Look over a boat-side on a breezy day, following the wind out to sea, and you will easily understand the simple instincts to which the waters were the primal cosmogonic element. What productive energy in this undulating mass, vital in every atom; in these multitudinous waves, so swift to break up sunshine into fiery flakes, and fling it off in a rain of delight! How mobile this liquid element, obedient to stir of wind, to lead of tide! To some unseen brooding Will it seems to say, "Shape me as you will, I am ready for your largest purpose, for your light and your law!" And were they not right who said, with foregleam of science, that the earth was product of water? Are not the green islands its offspring, the continents its heaped sediments, the record of its secular art? Has it not piled the countless layers, — its footfalls, its world-architecture? And as the living creatures came swarming in their times, has it not numbered and fed them and laid them to rest under its gentle rain of atoms, — the continents crumbled as they had been builded by its hand? Well might we fancy this rippling laughter, this pulsing rise and fall, this long commingling and commotion, to be the very quiver of the fecund life swarming beneath, — a life that foreshadows all forms elsewhere existing, and has its foretypes of all strivings towards the human, gracious and hateful, noble and mean. How universal the sea! The very hordes of

[1] See the *Bundehesh* story of the sea Vouru-kasha (vii. xiii.).

its tide-water pools mirror all greeds and competitions of man, — his Tartar raids, his hermits, and his parasites of thought. Its fine sands mingle scent of sea-weed and stir of minute life, the gleaming dust of shells, and the friction of abraded stone; no element of that earth-plasm forgot, which is to bloom into herb and flower, and beast and man. Its shores suggest what an infinitude of moods, emotions, aspirations, passions; what stress of resistance and endeavor; what tones and harmonies! The very pebbles it rolls and heaves into barriers to its own march resound monotonous with the familiar, ever unsolved mystery of life and death, the cry of whence and whither that ceases not from man's infancy to his latest maturity; and all is folded in a deeper silence and peace, where the mightiest waste of unrecorded history lays its hand on man's loneliness and fear, with gentle compulsion to trust. The Greeks held Ocean to be the father of Nemesis, — irreversible moral sequence; ethical requital. "Retribution," says Sophocles, "grows slowly, like the wave that rolls up the black sand." All nations have used it as the symbol not only of slow retributory law, but of wisdom hid in fathomless depths, — Mimir-wells, where the eye even of a god is lost in gaining it; of strength from patient discipline, of toil that earns the victory, of far ventures for ideal ends, — man's eternal monitor to courage and progress.

For the sea is no mere heap of salted waves; it is an idea; nor would it otherwise have been the mighty reservoir of mythology and faith. How full is man's speech and song of its ideal meaning as lord of wisdom and providence! Glaucus the mythic fisherman, longing for an ocean birth, and fascinated by the taste of briny plants, became a sea-god, blessing the people of the isles and shores with divine forewarnings; builder too of that mystic Argo which bore the tragic freight of sympathies and conquests for the Mediterranean races. All the old sea-

gods are prophets and teachers of the arts of life. Out of ocean-depths comes up Oannes, Cadmus, Melkarth of Tyre. Into them sails away Mexican Quetzalcoatl, fugitive from the world he has blessed, to return in better days. Out of deluge-waters emerge good men, in arks and with sacred words unlost, to re-people and rebuild the earth. Out of the welter of a ruined world, the twilight of the Scandinavian gods, uprise new isles, in whose springing grass are hid the dice of Destiny unharmed. So new religions rise from the chaos of outworn beliefs, to prove the eternal youth of the soul, whose births are cyclic, like the returning tides. Proclus said with reason that "Ocean is the cause of all motion, intellectual and natural." To the ancients these symbols were the ocean itself; for the moderns they must be read between the lines of its visible outward movement.

Thus conceived, the primal deep, whether of sky or sea, is not a material waste, but a prolific idea, in the religious consciousness of man. Whether personal Will, which in the Chaldean, Phœnician, and the Hebrew cosmogony is the creative force,[1] is emphasized as the organizer of chaos (*Bel*), or as shaper of it (*Elôhîm*) in the beginning, —whether as a mysterious desire (*Pothos*) inspiring it, or as Tauthe, the intelligible creator who brings wisdom into the Phœnician world of man, — is not matter of essential difference. The Chaldean Chaos, as well as the Phœnician, is itself conceived as a person; and so is the Hebrew Chaos. "Creation out of nothing," that intense monotheism which has been ascribed to the Elohistic will, is indeed as contrary to primitive intuition as it is to science;[2] it is a

[1] How much more strongly pronounced is this element of Will here than in Hindu mythology, which draws the world out of the One, — the unity of Being, "breathing not," neither "existence nor non-being," creating the worlds with a thought! Hesiod, again, like the Phœnician, rests creation, not on will, but on desire or love. It is in the *Avesta* that is seen this Aryo-Semitic will-power fully recognized as the creative force.

[2] The Hebrew word *bârâ*, rendered "created," properly meant *shaped*, out of some given material, and so *brought forth* thence. See Fürst and Gesenius.

modern abstraction unknown to the Hebrew myth, as to the other analogous ones, from El to Zeus. In these cases the abyss remains behind the personal act, which shapes it to orderly heaven and earth. And the imaginative aspect in which the abyss presents itself forbids us to regard it, so far at least, as a materialistic conception: Nature was full of personal, human meaning, the invincible Pothos or Eros of the Phœnician and Greek.[1] The difference seems to be that in the Chaldean creation this personality is divided into a series, beginning with chaos conceived as female; while in the Hebrew it has completer unity through all stages, as Elôhîm conceived as a man. Even this unity is of later origin, and the very plurality of Elôhîm is strong evidence of an original concurrence of many wills. The stricter monotheism belongs to the prophetic and post-exilian theology, and is certainly the Jahvistic elaboration of ideas closely resembling the Chaldean.

That half-disguised personal Will in the Chaldean Tiamat, at the beginning, is worthy of notice. Damascius[2] — who derived his Chaldean cosmogony from ancient sources — gives a series of male and female principles, preceding the positively creative work, which coincide with the birth of primal gods in the tablet inscriptions, — all centring in Tiamat, the living abyss. From these comes Belus, the demiurge or positive framer of things. The imagination of the ancient world always filled up the unity or space of religious conceptions with multiplications of names, either of special functions or successive generations or times. So Elôhîm says, "Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness." But personality is always involved. To suppose that by chaos a material origin is intended, is a delusion read into the old texts.

[1] Cory: *Ancient Fragments*, p. 92.
[2] Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 122, 123.

Early mythology is imaginative, and never conceives of creation otherwise than as the evolutionary act of living force; not always of direct personal volition, but of life in some form. The cosmos itself swarms with individual being, and there is nothing inert or dead. Desire is as old as the world, and inherent in its elements. Intelligence lives in the plasmic germ, and does not wait for man's upright form to hold it. The waters of Tiamat teem with strange monsters, not accounted for save by her living sway. Order enters when Bel, the male principle, proceeds to divide her substance, destroying the crude abortions of the dark, and separates heaven and earth, slaying her dragon life, in whose far-stretching monstrous folds all elements were involved. A Hebrew reminiscence of this myth survives in the seventy-fourth Psalm, where God is praised for breaking the heads of the sea-monsters, and notably giving the dead leviathan for meat to his people; and again, in the prophecy of Isaiah[1] concerning Babylon, where judgment is invoked upon her as "leviathan, the piercing serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea." The pictures of the sea-monster in the one hundred and fourth Psalm and in Job[2] may be added in proof of this traditional association of the waters with monsters of uncontrolled power, — quite as likely to be a reminiscence of the chaos-myth of Bel and Tiamat as of the Egyptian crocodile. The grand intuition, here worth all other mythic elements together, is the universal derivation of order from strife and strength of Will, from oldest Ophion and Cronos to Hellenic Zeus, — the supreme secret of philosophy and conduct, the meaning of Dualism in all ages of the world. Not less striking is the human form given in both cosmogonies, and the rationality of man as partaking of the Divine mind. Elôhîm creates man in his own (physical) image; and in the second account, Jahveh-

[1] Isaiah, xxvii. 1.

[2] Job, xli.; iii. 8.

Elôhîm makes him out of his breath and the dust of the earth. In both cases the materials are palpably sensuous, and the likeness is doubtless mainly physical.[1] So in the Polynesian-creation myth, which follows the Hebrew, even in details.[2] Man, whether formed of dust and breath, or of earth and brain, can be like his Maker only in the sense that the latter is in human form, a colossal omnipotent man; and this is precisely the fact concerning the conversing, walking, planning, and punishing powers of the Hebrew Jahveh-Elôhîm.

But here again the substance is ideal; and the root and type of man is found in the highest known personal life. The intenser monotheism of the Hebrew Creator, as compared with the Babylonian, who represents a brotherhood of gods, is due in part to a stronger sense of tribalism, and partly to the combination of Persian Ormuzd-worship with the prophetic spirit fostered in the Hebrews by the exile. The Avesta legend of creation, deriving man and woman[3] from the blood of the Bull (genius of earth), is a comparatively late construction of primitive Aryan myths.[4] But the older theism of the Yaçnas, in the second part,[5] is quite pure enough, as well as sufficiently spiritual and practical, to have had a large part in the formation of the highest Jahvistic conceptions. Ahuramazda is upholder of the pure creation, and first fashioner of the same; to him belongs all that is best and fairest, — the good spirit, the good law, the good wisdom, the kingdom and the power.[6] Nothing could have helped the Hebrew mind to positive monotheism so powerfully as this Persian god. The order of his creation, however, as described in the nineteenth Yaçna and

[1] Von Bohlen: *Genesis*, p. 18.
[2] Fornander: *The Polynesian Race*, p. 61.
[3] Mashya and Mashyâna are generic terms for man and woman, like Adam and Eve.
[4] Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 287, *et seq.*
[5] *Yaçna*, xxviii. *et seq.*
[6] Ibid., xix.; xliv. 1; xxxvii.; xliii.

developed in the much later Bundehesh, has but slight resemblance to the Hebrew. It is completed not in six days, but in three hundred and sixty-five; and its order is as follows, — heaven, water, earth, the Bull (cattle), trees, fire, pure man; and it is very doubtful if, in its oldest form, this order represented a succession in time. Still, there are points of resemblance: Creation is produced in six periods, Gahanbârs taking up a year.

Seen in the strong light of modern worship of an Infinite Person, this Hebrew story of creation is in the highest degree poetic. A will analogous to the human brings all things into being by word of mouth. "Let there be light: and there was light." "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The idea of such creative word is common to the Hebrew and the Persian (*Debar-Jahveh* and *Ahuna-vairya* are kindred conceptions), and to all races which worship pure Will, in distinction from impersonal ideas or principles, which were represented in ancient time, on the other hand, by the Hindu conception of the world as creation by pure thought. But we must remember that this conception of the cosmos is neither intellectually nor scientifically true. To say that the world is made by the word of God is no truer than to say that it is made by the sword of Bel-Merodach, cutting off his own head, or dividing the female principle from the male. Days, in any sense, do not exist before the sun; nor light earlier than the seeing eye of man; nor the heavenly firmament or the grass of the field before the sun and moon. And probably when the truths of evolution, the sciences of unfolding laws, are truly conceived, the eternal unity of the world with its substance will require no such anthropomorphic images to express its sublimity; these will cease to be poetically sublime, because supplanted both in the poetic and the philosophic mind by forms more adequate to the sense of truth. "The world,"

says even Philo, "could not have been created in time, because it is itself necessary to relations of time, and the heavens themselves mean mind."

The purely human interest of the Hebrew story appears more fully in the second account of creation, in which God is called Jahveh-Elôhîm.[1] It centres in the formation of man. It would explain, out of the national conception of deity, how man is closely related to this God; how he comes to be gifted with speech, so as to name creatures and things, and how woman comes to be inferior and dependent. In the first account nothing is said of distinction between the sexes; nor is there any hint of Adam's intimacy with the Maker, and of the gifts and commands that attest it. Other differences have been ingeniously noted,[2] not so important nor so certain, — that the first account appears to belong to a river country (like Babylon), where water would naturally be held the first condition of things; and the last to a dry-land, where production seems spontaneous or instantaneous, where men and trees might seem formed from the dust, and mists from the earth, not rain, water the land. More striking is the very sensuous conception of Jahveh-Elôhîm,[3] and the mystical etymology of the name of woman (*'îshâ*) from that of man (*'îsh*).[4]

I. In view of the manifest dependence of the Hebrew story of creation on Persian influence, as well as on a developed nationality, we can hardly be mistaken in regarding the elements which it has in common with the Chaldean legend as borrowed from the latter, rather than as suggesting it. And this judgment is confirmed by the antiquity of the cuneiform record, and by the confession of the Hebrews as to their original home, the locality of their Eden, and the point of departure for varieties of tribes and

[1] Genesis, ii.–iii.
[2] Von Bohlen.
[3] Genesis, ii. 18–21; iii. 8.
[4] Ibid., ii. 23.

languages at Babylon. The assertion of Rawlinson,[1] that "the inspired author of Genesis has preserved the genuine account of a primeval tradition of creation common to the race, while the Chaldeans disfigured it with evident mythology, such as the cleaving of the woman Thalatth in twain, and the beheading of Belus," betrays notions of the receptivity of primeval man for information as to his own origin for which science can have little respect. The origin of such assumptions in preconceived ideas of Biblical infallibility is obvious. A purer example of elaborate mythological construction than the Hebrew story of Creation can hardly be imagined. But beyond Chaldean antiquity, into the mists of prehistoric time, it is idle and impossible to follow this myth of creation.[2]

II. The *Eden Legend*[3] testifies to its origin in the vicinity of the Euphrates and Tigris, — the names of the other two rivers being words that simply mean "flowing waters," and used as generic terms for the purpose of making up the number *four*, the conventional sign of completeness in all Eastern mythologies. It has been noted that the mention of the name Euphrates, without comment, as already well known, points to a Babylonian origin. The conjecture of Von Bohlen that Eden is Eran, with the change of *r* into *d*, is less probable. Eden corresponds with Persian "parks," but not with the Avesta paradise of Yima, which is a form of social relations and polity conceived as ideally perfect, free from sin and disease, the heaven of a few pure Zoroastrian disciples. The Genesis myth is in fact a conscious generalization of history, with the purpose of explaining moral evil and the stern necessity of labor as results of disobedience to a

[1] *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 144.

[2] See Halévy (*Rev. Crit. d'Histoire et de Littérature*, December 13, 1880)

[3] Sir H. Rawlinson, in 1869, deduced from the cuneiform inscriptions the full conviction that the Genesis paradise was meant to be *Gan-Duniyas* or Babylonia; and the belief is not now seriously opposed.

personal commandment. Crude as the idea was, it came to be combined with the really philosophical notion of bringing the living creatures to man to receive their names. And this alone would indicate the late origin of the story. It has evidently grown out of developed views of the primacy of mind over matter, of a natural harmony of man with the universe, and his dependence on conformity with its laws.

When we add that the terms "Eden" and "Garden of God" belong especially to the exile-period,[1] it becomes very certain that the myth received its distinctive form in the midst of the advanced civilization of Babylon. This philosophical interest in the problems of life and character apparent in the Genesis legends as a whole, could hardly have been combined with the childlike qualities originally conspicuous in them without a long period of incubation in a much wider horizon than the narrow nationality of the Hebrew could supply. But behind the whole, and determining its animus, is the nomadic temperament, jealous of its license, hating labor, and relucting at its slow conditions; trusting spontaneous Nature, and absorbed in the imperious will of a tribal chief; making protest against inevitable contact with a more complex and progressive civilization. Thus far, nothing corresponding to the Genesis paradise has been found in the cuneiform records, but it is hardly possible that such a feature should be wholly wanting.

III. These elements come out more forcibly in the *Legend of the Temptation and Fall.* We have here the Hebrew, and more distinctly the Semitic, conception of the origin of evil, in a rebellious conflict of the will of man against the will of God, his Creator. No other or deeper ground enters into the theory of this legend; no reason for the command to abstain from the tree of knowledge

[1] Ezekiel, xxviii. 13.

but the arbitrary will of God; no explanation of disobedience but the arbitrary will of man. In the Avesta it is the *falsehood* of the tempter's teaching that makes the sin of yielding to it. In Genesis, what the tempter teaches is true, and the sin is simply in the refusal of the human will to be led by the Divine. Ahriman does not rebel against the will of Ahura as such; he chooses the dark as Ahura chooses the light,—the one the false, the other the true. In both cases, the origin of moral evil is in disobedience to a personal Will; but in the Avesta the rights of this Will rest on the deeper ground of truth and light; in Genesis they have no ground beyond themselves. Thus in the Persian the ethical claim dominates and explains the personal; in the Hebrew, the personal is absolute and all-controlling. The older Avesta has nothing corresponding to the special legend of Adam's fall. In the later Bundehesh, the story of Mashya and Mashyâna has few resemblances to it beyond the facts that in both stories a primitive couple, born innocent and taught the right way, are tempted by the power of evil, break the law of duty, and are punished. In one case the punishment is by expulsion from Eden; in the other, by demoralization of habits, and by condemnation at last to hell, the details of which are given in the Bundehesh.[1] In neither case is there the slightest approach to a solution of the great problem of evil.

Again, the ethnic distinction already noticed between Iranian and Hebrew conceptions is here well illustrated. (1) The cause of Yima's fall is "lying speech," as in itself the crime of crimes; while that of Adam consists in disobedience to the special command of an arbitrary Will to refrain from a certain kind of food. Aryan worship of personal power is wont to find some foothold in the nature of things as foundation of moral allegiance, while the in-

[1] Chap. xv.

tense Semitic form of the same worship rests on the pure rights of an absolute Will. (2) In the Paradise from which Yima falls, labor is the blessed condition of freedom from age, disease, and sin; and Yima's toils fill his dominion with seeds and harvests, with cattle and men innumerable. In the Adamic Eden, God himself has planted the garden, which man has only to dress and keep, being bidden to eat freely of every tree of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And *labor* becomes the penalty he incurs in being exiled from it; the *cause* of exile from the nomadic heaven of exemption from manual work, — a free roving life in Nature. Here, as in the succeeding legends, especially that of the murder of Abel, the nomad signifies his dislike of the settled agriculturist and industrial races, his reaction against that Babylonian civilization, probably, from which he had emigrated in the early time. The later experiences of the Captivity fostered the inborn instinct. And the subtile myth in its present form consciously reproves the curiosity of man for knowledge as sin against an imminent Will, whose prerogative it is to govern through jealous monopoly of the wisdom that entitles to sway. It has even been said that the hatred of the nomad for labor was the source of the story of the Fall. This hatred of labor was transmitted to the later Jews, who, however, escape the old prejudice in their Talmud.[1]

The childish fear of a tribal god has become developed by later associations — among which subjection to a highly enlightened conquering state was not the least impressive — into the conception that progress in knowledge is marked by Divine displeasure as sin; and the recklessness of the nomad for the morrow survives all experiences of a better culture, ending as it began in pronouncing labor a curse, and warning against that desire to know, that curiosity

[1] Schreiber: *Talmud*, p. 46.

to construct and aspire, of which labor is the instrument and the crown. At the same time, the Hebrew had been obliged to admit that this form of life makes men resemble gods, and that the arts and inventions of society have proceeded from these apparent crimes against the nomad and his rights. Cain built a city east of Eden and called it Enoch, after his first descendant (compare Assyrian *enuk*, "wise"), an evident reference to Chaldean centres; and his subsequent line discover music and metallurgy.[1] All this Jahveh .has cursed as the fruit of fratricide, the martyrdom of the nomad. Such the connection of the Hebrew legend with historical and ethnic relations.

Nothing, however, answering to the Genesis Fall of Man has yet been discovered in Chaldean inscriptions or traditions. The Deluge is, perhaps; it would seem so from one passage, — "the doer of sin bore his sin, the blasphemer bore his blasphemy."[2] But the figures supposed by Smith to represent the temptation scene — the man and woman under the tree eating fruit, with the serpent erect behind them — turns out not to picture the two sexes; and the Creation-tablet, referred to the same idea by Smith, is now shown by Oppert to require a very different translation.[3] Nevertheless, Lenormant finds very close resemblance to the old naturalistic use of the serpent as the representative of evil and temptation.[4] And his zeal for orthodoxy leads him to emphasize the idea that the inspired writer of Genesis, in making this use of an unhistorical tradition among the old races around him, was moved solely by the desire to give it a moral meaning, in explaining the Fall of Man through misuse of evil

[1] Genesis, iv. 16-22.

[2] Smith: *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, Izdubar col. v. 15, p. 288 (Sayce).

[3] Ibid., p. 75.

[4] *Les origines de l'histoire*, p. 93. Very similar representations have been found on Roman sarcophagi, imitated by early Christian artists, of the Fall, and on a Phœnician vase of the sixth century before Christ, discovered by Di Cesnola in Cyprus.

will. And this he thinks has been the "only" solution of this redoubtable problem "to be found in history."[1]

The various motives combined in the story of the Fall show it to be the result of late elaboration. The shame at sexual relations alone would mark a late origin. Could such ascetic quality be natural to the Hebrews? What other infantile people ever coupled the desire of knowledge with shame at discovering their own nakedness? But we may now recognize the elements which point to a very ancient fund of Semitic beliefs. The attempt to justify the dependence of woman upon man, "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," by making her from his rib, and to hold her responsible for his violation of a command which the legend does not pretend that she had heard, appears to indicate a dogmatic motive rather than an early instinct. But the martyrdom and fall alike of Semitic gods and heroes are always mythically associated with the female as instrument of the evil fate, as we have already shown. Far back in Accadian times, the epic hero Izdubar refuses the love of the goddess on account of the innumerable woes caused by her enchantments and temptations. But in one respect this older disparagement of the female element differs from that of the Genesis legend. It refers moral evil back to the lower passions in human nature; while the other, in conformity with the general spirit of Hebrew thought, makes it a positive wilful revolt against higher will. The Persians had no such associations with the female sex, as responsible for man's fall. Falsehood, not woman, was the weapon of Ahriman; by that he corrupted Yima, by that he seduced Mashya and Mashyâna from their primitive innocence. In this later legend of Creation the sexes were so united as to be indistinguishable, and only quarrel after Ahriman has deluded both.[2]

[1] Lenormant: *Les origines de l'histoire*, p. 108.

[2] *Bundehesh*, xv.

The choice of the serpent, in human form, as tempter of Eve to become equal with God, might seem a natural selection of the great type of intelligence throughout antiquity, to represent that forbidden thirst for knowledge which was the Hebrew's peculiar dread. But so special a reason is not required. The name *nâchâsh* (serpent) is Aryan.[1] The serpent belongs to the Ahrimanic creation, and is even Ahriman himself, — the symbol being easily traceable to the hostile meaning of the wreathed rain-withholding cloud in that incessant atmospheric warfare of light with darkness round which Aryan mythology revolves. It is extremely probable that the Semitic hate of the serpent rests primitively on these same apparently universal phenomena. But the direct origin of the latter is evidently in Chaldean traditions. The two-edged swords of the cherubim are identical with the winged bulls of the Assyrian palaces;[2] and though there is no mention of a forbidden Tree of Knowledge, there is at any rate a Tree of Life both in the tablet monuments and in the legends. The old Babylonian seal represents two figures sitting beside a tree and holding out their hands to its fruit, while a serpent is in the background. That the date of these Chaldean elements must be at least 2000 years B. C. is attested by numerous seals and inscriptions. The serpent Ophion, first a god, precipitated into the sea by Cronos, holds the position of evil power in the Phœnician mythology. In contrast with these traditions, strong proof of the comparatively late origin of the Hebrew story is to be found in a complexity of structure and purpose, which even the simplicity of its elements and style cannot cover, — the prostration of the serpent, and its thoroughly dogmatic explanation; the manifest purpose to justify the subjection of woman; the punishment of man for yielding

[1] It is given by the Buddhists to the primitive tribes of India and Thibet.

[2] Lenormant: *Les origines de l'histoire d'après la Bible*, p. 129.

his will to the sex which should represent the passive as he the active elements; the jealous God, deliberately testing his offspring, and enforcing an obedience which touches hidden springs of character; the pains of child-bearing, the burden of toil, referred to highly artificial causes in human disobedience to arbitrary will. Here is obviously the result of an elaborate construction to meet a state of mind in which religious preconceptions and speculative questions were curiously intermingled. The air of simplicity is due to that intense consciousness of personal relations with God which the Hebrew inherited in his Semitic nationalism. This imminent personal Will is distinctly human; walks in the garden, converses, gives way to emotions; guards his exclusive right to immortal life by Chaldean cherubim and waving sword. Of course, the cherubim are the winged creatures at the gates of Assyrian palaces, and the sword is the weapon of Bel which "waved four ways."[1] The autocratic jealousy which says, "Behold now! man is become like one of us," differs most decidedly from the aristocratic contempt of Zeus for that "wretched race of men" whom Prometheus had exalted. Greek mythology, indeed, explains the dark side of nature and life by the jealousy of its Olympian powers. Pallas and Hera and Poseidon are jealous deities; and from the play of their exclusively human loves and hates come the wars and woes of mortals, the tragedy and epos of the world.[2] But the balance of powers and tendencies in polytheism involved these conflicts of motives and claims: they testify to an inward protest against exclusiveness in the interest of beauty and freedom. The jealousy of Jahveh is immitigable, and cannot relent in face of opposition; it is absolute as his unity, as arbitrary as his creative will.

[1] *Records of the Past*, ix. p 136. [2] See *Odyssey*, v. 119.

Modern theology, dating from Paul of Tarsus, has read into this doctrinal myth of the expulsion from Eden a more startling dogma, of which it is entirely innocent, — that of the representative Fall of the first man, and its consequence, inherited sin; of which the theory of redemption through an incarnate God is the necessary correlative. A striking instance of the Bibliolatry with which scientific studies are still confused and disabled, is in Lenormant's elaborate collection of mythologic resemblances in the description of the Fall of Man by various races,[1] to prove that an original tradition, revealed to men, "of the events by which the fate of humanity was decided," preserved "in a mysterious symbolic memory," had been distorted by the spirit of error among the Gentiles, and partially among the Hebrews also, but restored to its true significance "by the inspired author of Genesis." It should be needless to say that no such events are shown, nor is any "symbolic memory" of them proved; and that the version of the Fall in Genesis has no monopoly of ethical or spiritual meaning.

The leading purpose of the legend seems to have been to bring out of Adam a twofold race, — one representing the accursed slaves of labor, the other the happy favorites of freedom. The grudge of the nomadic against the settled races, which thus betrays itself in the penalty of the Fall and in the overthrow of Babel, is more boldly confessed in the story of Cain and Abel, whose very names express the antagonism. This prejudice appropriated to its uses the old wide-spread myth of the foundation of cities by fratricides, whose diffusion equals that of the Deluge, yet is not used by Lenormant to prove a primitive revelation, because it would hardly suit his purpose. Its real meaning consists, of course, in the social antagonism of the settler and the nomad. As we go on, the

[1] *Contemporary Review*, September, 1879.

proofs multiply of a Hebrew reaction against that splendid industrial civilization from which the materials for these stories were inevitably drawn. No less striking is the contrast with the agricultural tendencies of the Avesta. The reaction referred to was in fact a reinsistence, in the interest of national association, on the beliefs and habits of a tribe which, wandering from its Chaldean home, made the deserts and mountains of northern Mesopotamia its halting-place, where it unfolded that antagonism between the inhabitants of highlands and those of plains along the navigable streams, which belongs to early epochs in Aryan and Semitic races alike. This antagonism, too, had much to do in producing the famous genealogy of nations in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and is clearly traceable in the distinct parallelism of the names of the two lists of Adam's sons, — the Sethites and Cainites, — in which each name is slightly modified in the one list to produce an opposite moral meaning to that which it bears in the other.[1]

In the list of Shem's descendants this is not so evident. The names of the ten patriarchs had their foretype in Chaldean tradition. The ten antediluvian kings of Berosus' chronology cover four hundred and thirty-two thousand years, — evidently an astronomical cycle,[2] the great year of the stars,[3] — and their names have been ingeniously derived[4] from the animals of the zodiacal and sidereal signs, first marked and named by the Chaldeans. The same number of progenitors appears in most ancient cosmogonies, — in the Persian Peshdadians, the Hindu great gods, the ancestors of Odin, the Chinese mythic kings. But whatever their astronomical meaning, the names of these Chaldean antediluvian kings are mostly compounds of Anu, oldest and chief of Chaldean gods. The number

[1] Lenormant: *Les origines de l'histoire d'après la Bible*, p. 181. Von Bohlen: *Genesis*.

[2] Lenormant: *Essai des fragments cosmogoniques*, p. 230. Diod. Sic. ii. p. 36.

[3] Ibid., p. 216.

[4] Ibid., pp. 249, 250.

ten has a universal mythic value, which has even been traced back to the name for the fingers of the hand.[1] The only direct point of attachment of the ten Hebrew patriarchal names with these solar traditions is the lifetime of Enoch, which has precisely the length of a solar year. Yet not only their undoubted origin, but their elaboration at Babylon, must have associated them with physical and even solar phenomena.[2] Some of them are found to be Babylonian and Phœnician.[3] They were taken from a pre-existing fund of materials for mythic construction, since they are mainly the same with the previous list of Cain's descendants, and have been used to serve very different purposes in such construction. The main point is that they are now shown to have belonged to the so-called "Book of Origins," compiled by a priestly writer in the Captivity. The very limited lifetimes ascribed to the patriarchs, as compared with the Chaldean kings,[4] indicate that the purpose of this writer was not like that of the latter enumerator, to fill up the vast void of past time with human or divine lives, but a very different one; probably to show that disobedience has gradually diminished the actual duration of a lifetime, and to exalt Jahveh as ordainer of the law that virtue assured length of years, and vice early death. God's spirit would not endure long strife with evil-doing; and so from Adam to Abraham, the allotted period shrinks from nine centuries to less than two.

These mythic procedures do not yield us any light on the transition from patriarchal to civil forms of government, nor should we expect any such historic or political

[1] Eckstein: *Les Sources de la Cosmogonie de Sanchoniathon.*

[2] Goldziher: *Mythology among the Hebrews*, pp. 18, 19.

[3] Smith: *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (Sayce), p. 316.

[4] Lenormant imagines that he finds one of the exact scales on which these earlier cyclic numbers were diminished by the Hebrew mythologer (*Les Origines de l'histoire*, etc., p. 276) in the reckoning of each patriarch's life down to the birth of his oldest son. Oppert thinks he put a week for every five years of the Babylonian figures (Ibid., p. 277).

sense in the Hebrew tribes. We have here simply a genealogical tree of the Hebrew race, constructed on the principles already stated, to meet the demand for some account of that primeval epoch which the religious importance of the Deluge made of high interest.

IV. In view of the derivation of all things from a watery chaos at the divine command, the notion of Floods overwhelming disobedient races, whose life had proved the failure of this creative process, was perfectly natural. The fact that many races, especially Semitic and Aryan, have the idea embodied in myths, does not prove a common origin, still less a primeval revelation. It was simply a recurrence of the mind to the primitive waste and disorder, as a state which would give opportunity to the good-will of God to evoke a new human order by a repetition of the first process, or by one analogous to the first. The large significance given by ancient mythology to the term *ocean*, would make it easy for a people dwelling beside great rivers like the Euphrates and Tigris to ascribe world-wide destructive effects to their inundations, and to make these the basis of moral and social renewal. The class of myths to which the Deluge belongs grows out of the demand of the human mind for cyclic movement, for rhythmic recurrence of conditions, as a sign of continued purpose, harmonious relation, and providential care. The safe return of the circle into itself guarantees perfect order. So the soul is set to rhythms of its own, and instinctively seeks alternation in the destinies of the cosmos as in the details of experience. It keeps constant regard to its past steps, will have familiar nodes, recurrent refrains, that make its movement ideal, and turn even its limits into liberties. And so cyclic destruction and renovation belong to the very framework of positive religions,[1] confessions of the mingled faith and fear on

[1] Brinton: *Myths of the New World*, p. 198.

which these are strung. The Deluge-myth is moreover too widely spread in various forms to be referred to anything less universal than such a demand as is here described.[1] But historically the Hebrew story is evidently of Chaldean origin, as its extreme resemblance to that of Berosus and that of the Izdubar epic is sufficient to show.[2] The Xisuthrus of this very ancient legend is the Hasisadra of the cuneiform epic,—as found and translated by George Smith, and improved by later interpreters. The Izdubar epic is far older than the Hebrew version, and even more nearly identical with it than the account in Berosus,[3] since it explains the Deluge as a penalty for sin; as does also the Greek legend of Deucalion. The corresponding Hindu legend, on the contrary, in which Manu is saved by the fish as an incarnation only, has no hint of this. The Chinese "Deluge of Yao" is no deluge at all, but a myth of agricultural industry. The originality of the story of Hasisadra is shown by the fact that it makes a part of a great epopee, and that its whole setting, as well as spirit, is Chaldean. It could never, by any possibility, have been borrowed from the Genesis record. The points of resemblance are decisive; those of difference few and trivial, relating only to petty details. These differences, — such as the size and form of the ark, the location of the mountain, the smaller number of persons saved in the Hebrew Deluge to re-people the earth, the translation of Hasisadra like Enoch to heaven or some remote region, his voice heard in the air bidding his companions take up the books

[1] What has been said of Lenormant's effort to show a wide-spread similarity in creation-myths to justify his conclusion of a primeval revelation, is still more applicable to his collection of parallel Deluge-legends. The advocates of such a revelation have little or nothing to stand upon, loudly as they have proclaimed the Noachic story. Behind the Babylonian epic it is impossible to penetrate. This has been satisfactorily shown by the criticism of Halévy on Lenormant's *Les origines de civilization* in the *Revue Critique de l'Hist. et Lit.*, Dec. 27, 1880. See also *Revue de l'Hist. des Religions*, ii. 1; iii. 2.

[2] Cory: *Ancient Fragments*, p. 54 (extract from Syncellus).

[3] Given in Polyhistor and Arbydenus.

of the law buried at Surippak and give them to the world, — are part of the local coloring, and do not throw doubt on the conclusion above stated. In no case is the indebtedness of the Hebrews more evident. The command to build the ark, the threat to destroy mankind, the entry of the animals, the opening of the windows and sending forth of birds, the altar built on leaving the ark, the pleasant savor of the offering to the senses of Jahveh, the promise that the earth should not again be drowned, the covenant and the blessing, — all show that the Hebrew copied from this original. Not only is the ark coated with bitumen in both legends, but precisely such gopher-wood structures navigate the Euphrates to this day.[1]

The origin of the ark-form of the Deluge-myth is probably in the notion of an enclosed vital energy, which breaks forth out of chaos to make or renew. World-egg, vessel, chest, basket, various symbols of this envelopment are conceived; and the mythology of Deliverance is traceable throughout antiquity by these varied forms of one idea.[2] The vital energy of the world or sun, in manifold forms of struggle against the powers of darkness, or of triumph over chaos or death, is ever represented.

Osiris, Adonis, Dionysus, Melkarth, are forms of what the Egyptian funeral ritual invokes as "the Great One in the chest," or ark. The sacred ship that bears gods or heroes or divine men to world-mastery or redeeming work, sails through every mythologic sea, and is borne in every festal train. The egg breaks asunder, and life, order, deity emerge by the law of birth out of death, which nought escapes. The infant king of Assyria, and the babe who is to deliver Israel, alike lie exposed in baskets among the rushes of the river, and must be saved themselves before they can save others. The arks of Sargon and of Moses

[1] Loftus: *Chaldæa and Susiana*, p. 69.
[2] See this well put in Brown's *Great Dionysiak Myth*, i. 196.

are after all the same symbol as the mystic basket of the Persian ritual and the Deluge-arks whence the world is renewed. Finally, the old land of exile itself becomes the world-egg, or sacred chest for a new Messiah, of whom it was written, "out of Egypt have I called my Son."

The Hebrew relaters of the Flood differ from all others in laying the scene of world-renewal in a region remote from their own, thereby confessing their indebtedness to a foreign source. They have, in addition, set the beginning of the rain at the autumnal equinox, which time, in Chaldea, actually opens the rainy season.[1] Undoubtedly the Euphrates furnished the materials of the story by its inundations, which still cause the whole land to become "pools;"[2] and these materials were used in the later Hebrew theological revival, as well as in the Chaldean epos, to enforce the idea of chastisement by a personal God for disobedience to his will. In the early time, all the Nature-gods come in to help Hea, the god of waters, bring on the storm; and Bel, as deliverer, takes Hasisadra by the hand. This fact alone would prove the Hebrew version, as strictly monotheistic, to be the later. Nevertheless, Rawlinson as usual assumes that the Hebrews have preserved the tradition of the Deluge in its primeval truth, while the Chaldean account adds these points in which the two stories differ, "because not content with the plain truth"!

The Hebrew legend, though more monotheistic, is at the same time more exclusive, arbitrary, and dogmatic in

[1] Lenormant: *Le déluge et l'epopée Babylonienne.*

[2] At this day "the waters which descend every year from the Armenian mountains are sufficient to make several such rivers as the Euphrates, which breaks over its banks and cuts new channels, and but for incessant canalling would keep the rich lands of Mesopotamia under water every year. The peasants told Kadree Pasha that the overflow of the Euphrates was in the hands of God. 'I am not going to look into that matter,' answered the unbiblical Moslem official; 'what concerns me is how you have spent the twelve thousand pounds appointed by the government to regulate it.'" Geary's *Journey through Asiatic Turkey*, vol. i chap. xi. 1878.

tone than the Chaldean. It carries the worship of personal Will to a more extreme form, centring in a jealous Individual, whose whole dealing with man is by tests and retributions. In no other way could the sovereignty of a national God be displayed; and so the later mythologies explain the mysteries and burdens of life as penalties of his inflicting. The first man and woman are made to sin that the Creator may subject the one to the burden of labor and the other to the pangs of childbirth and the will of her husband.[1] Next, all mankind sin, that the Omnipotent Individual may doom all to death; He finds Noah only worthy to be saved, in order that in this one family the whole future of mankind may be concentred. He is evidently laying down the (mythic) rule, according to which all history should converge to a single people, as alone fit to be chosen for his own. And so the whole primeval history of man is shaped into a chain to bind the human race into the service of the Hebrew and his God.

The Chaldean story of the Deluge, on the other hand, was simply an episode in an epic, based on natural phenomena describing the work of Nature-gods, and had no special motive beyond transporting a holy man to a remote place of blessedness, where the hero of the epos may consult him, far away along the Erythræan shores consecrated by traditions of the primal ocean, of the first revelation of social wisdom, the earliest schools, libraries, and priesthoods. There is no purpose of extolling the gods of Assyria or Chaldea, nor of expounding the philosophy of penalty, nor of accounting by personal inflictions for the evils of life. These old materials of a common Semitic fund the Hebrew revisers, under the new national impulse, elaborated in the conscious interest of a God who from the beginning chooses out one man to receive his favor, while

[1] Genesis, iii. 16–19.

all the rest suffer the penalties of disobedience to his sovereign will. No indication of the nature of this sin is given, beyond the charge that men took wives at their will. The assertion ascribed to Elôhîm, that every imagination of man's heart was evil continually, and that he repented having made him, is evidently a late product of dogmatic motive. No early social epoch of civilization could be guilty of so pessimistic a view of human nature. It is devised for the purpose of setting off the righteousness of Elôhîm, and justifying his choice of a special people: his rage at his own work and his resolve to destroy it are not less characteristic of autocratic will. Noah (renewal) is interpreted to mean *comfort:* one man only, a type of the chosen people, with his family, is saved from the deluge of evil in the surrounding world. The intense earnestness of this motive gives a simplicity to the style, which renders it at once naïve and sublime. All description of Nature is wanting, because the motive has no regard either for Nature or beauty as such. It is absorbed in the absolutism of Divine Will. It culminates in a commandment to be fruitful and multiply, and to avoid eating flesh with the blood, or the shedding of blood, — traditional precepts, marking early transitional steps towards civilization, — and in what is called the Noachic covenant, of which the sign is the bow in the cloud. Of this exclusiveness the Chaldean story has not a trace. It lays no emphasis on Hasisadra being the only good man: his servants, male and female, and "the sons of the people" are saved with him. The gods do not act arbitrarily nor autocratically. Hea tenderly remonstrates with Bel, dissuading him from severity towards men; and the final propitiation, answering to the promise to Noah in the rainbow, is induced not as in his case by the sweet savor of a sacrifice, but by the reasons, suggested through Hea, that a sweeping penalty would be unjust, and by the sympathy of Ishtar,

who with the other gods compassionates mankind with covered lips.[1] The only form in which the idea of a Deluge appears in the Persian books, is the battle of Tistrya to purify the great waters of Ahura from the poison of Ahriman.[2] The rain falls for ten days and nights, and the earth is covered to the height of a man, and all evil creatures are drowned. A great wind sweeps the waters into a great sea, which Ahura sends Tistrya to free from the poison of Ahriman's dead; and in the great battle he is aided by mighty rains, which afterward serve to fertilize the earth. This is evidently wholly disconnected from the penal deluge of the Semites, and forms but a natural phase of the great War of Deliverance which Mazdeism carried through all the elements and forms of Nature. The waters are not penal; they are healing, the pure gift of Ahura, serving only to bless mankind. They are invoked, in the Avesta legend, by the serpent Dahâka, for aid in destroying men; but in the form of the spotless Ardvî-çûra they refuse him the boon,[3] while she grants the prayer of Thraêtona for aid to destroy the serpent.[4] "Come, O ye clouds, come! Let the waters spread, fall, and spread abroad! Pour ten thousand waves, —speak, O holy Zarathustra! for the destruction of disease and death, of the evils sent by evil powers; for the destruction of all that injures men. Let the earth, plants, all healing things, be renewed."[5]

V. The ethnographical study in the tenth chapter of Genesis, purporting to be the descending line of Noah's sons, is a carefully prepared record of the nations known to the Hebrews of the exile, and of those only, — each treated as a distinct person, instead of a mixed community. It illustrates again how powerful was the Semitic impulse

[1] Sayce's Smith: *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 287, *et seq.*

[2] *Bundehesh*, vii. [3] *Abân-Yasht*, 7. [4] Ibid., 8.

[5] *Vendidâd*, xxi. 3–14; Harlez. See also *Yaçna*, lxiv.

to give a personal form to every object of thought. Of linguistic relations there is really no more conception than would be conveyed by the fact that the nations are grouped according to their geographical position, as Herder recognized long ago.[1] Such a study was possible only in a centre like Babylon. The Hebrews, in their early tribal isolation, could not have conceived such a synthesis. *Ham* simply means black tribes of the hot south; and *Japheth*, whether signifying the "brilliant" or the "far-spread," is really a term for the nations of the West.[2] Canaan is oddly enough placed among the Hamites, though Canaanite and Hebrew were certainly of the same ethnic origin, of which the writers were probably unaware. The Philistines are wrongly traced to Egypt. Elam was not Semitic, but Accadian. The reference to Sidon proves a late origin.[3]

VI. This geographical character of the distribution, which explains the ethnological errors, modifies the national interest of the myth;[4] but such an interest becomes very evident, not only in the treatment of the family of Ham, but especially in the legend of the Tower of Babel. A cuneiform tablet recently discovered speaks of a confusion of counsels relating to a piece of tower-work, and of its destruction by the anger of Anu.[5] Berosus helps confirm the probability that this is the original story of the Tower of Babel, by his own story that the gods in early time, angry at men's efforts to scale the sky, overturned their work by great winds, and caused confusion of speech, which had before been one and the same.[6] But this, so

[1] Herder: *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit.*

[2] Goldziher's solar etymologies on these points are extremely unsatisfactory.

[3] Rawlinson (*Origin of Nations*) has an elaborate effort to show that nothing in the table is disputed by science. But his argument is a palpable failure, full of hypotheses, and after all finding a mere fraction of the designations historically verified.

[4] Von Bohlen: *Genesis*, ii. 202.

[5] *Records of the Past* (tr. by Boscawen), vii. 129. Smith: *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, Sayce, pp. 163–165.

[6] Cory; *Ancient Fragments* (from Alexander Polyhistor), p. 75.

far as it goes on the ethnology of Babel as "confusion," must have come from the Hebrews; no Chaldean would ever have supposed Babel to mean anything but the "gate of God." Whatever may have been the earliest form of the story, the anger of God at the pride of man which sought to scale heaven is thoroughly Hebrew. The hatred of the nomad for settled life, which constructed the tale of Cain's fratricide, and ascribed to his descendants the first cities, sciences, arts, and which perhaps moved the ancestors of the Hebrews to go out from "Ur of the Chaldees," was stimulated by the great gathering of races at Babylon and their diversity of speech. These were an offence to the nationality of the exiles. The unfinished tower of Belus, the mighty ruin with its haunting legend of offended powers, was taken as the sign of a becoming jealousy in their own God; the vitrified bricks around it proved a fall by lightning, — and so the story reached its present shape in the Jahvistic revisal of traditions after the exile. Rawlinson again gives the Hebrew the credit of preserving the original revelation, and the Chaldean the discredit of having tampered with its interest for mankind for the sake of enhancing certain "sacred books" of their own, — a charge really applicable to the Hebrews, whose interest in mankind is confined to bringing the whole race under the power and wrath of their national deity. Later still, the Christian writers Cyril, Eusebius, Syncellus, and others, citing Berosus who says the gods overturned the tower of Babel, falsified the text to make it correspond with the Bible, substituting "God" for "the gods."[1]

In Bible apologetics of the kind we have given, Rawlinson simply follows the traditional method of the Christian Church. The relation of the Hebrew myths to the ethnic ones which they so much resemble, when not positively inverted so as to make the latter the borrowers, is mis-

[1] Carré: *L'Ancien Orient.* ii. 462.

represented as being the introduction of a wholly new and higher spirit, universal and divine as the others are human and special, and as revealing the one true God as distinguished from the false gods of the Asiatic races. But the Hebrew introduced no such new foundation of authority, no such new ground of certitude. What the Abrahamite really demanded was that his God should have a more human volition and selection, if possible, than other gods; that a covenant should be made with him as between two men, promising a special care and the multiplication of seed on the one side in return for obedience on the other. After the exile had somewhat purified this personal relation by a consciousness of ethnic connection and dependence; after maturer thought had applied it to the solution of social and moral problems; after the prophetic spirit had breathed upon it, — the same monotheistic separatism and exclusive interest still remained firm, although obliged to concede somewhat to these enlarging influences. The national theocratic writer who worked up the old mythology in its present form was mainly intent on bringing the history of mankind into the line of Jahvistic providence and guidance. Now the historic value of this step is simply that which belongs to the idea of personal Will as the substance of God. This idea we have already stated to be characteristic of all the religions of Iran. We have here its culmination in a series of acts by which Jahveh chooses a single people as his typical heirs and representatives for the government of the world. It is this expansion of the Iranian type of worship by the Hebrews that makes their traditional mythology interesting in our present inquiry. As a stage in the progress of man to universal religion, the Iranian conception is still predominant; and the Hebrew phase of it is of immense historic importance.

But neither the Iranian conception, nor its Hebrew or Semitic expansion, is for us the measure and test of uni-

versal truth. This mode of conceiving the substance of the universe can no longer remain unquestioned, even in its still more expanded form, as Christian theology. We have seen that the Hindu mind tended to worship abstract unity and super-personal being as more satisfactory than any definite personal conception. In its pantheism a conscious personal choice of human instruments, men, or nations would be out of place. The Chinese, on the other hand, have not separated deity from the concrete detail of the universe; and here again such a personal choice would not be rational. Modern science has still other objections. Science abolishes supernatural volitions acting from without, and so tends to reject the idea of a personal Creator, in the commonly received sense of the words. Universal Religion, reaching to the inscrutableness of Infinite Being as the substance of the cosmos itself, shrinks ever more and more from ascribing personal motives, intentions, or individual volitions to this Substance. The authority of principles whose root is in realities behind all personal wills, which must be based in them, not they in it, becomes the foundation of absolute morality. The Semitic religions, — Judaism, Christianity, Islam, — were enfolding sheaths of anthropomorphic mythology, needed for a time to protect the growing sense of essential cosmic order, until that which they instinctively groped after should come, as they had come, successively, in their day. That Christianity gave noble meaning to the doctrine of a divine Will, by emphasizing the element of Fatherhood therein is true, and hence its immense historic value; but that did not and could not destroy the essential character of sovereign Will as arbitrary, finite, external. With all its tenderer, freer materials, Christianity did not alter the Hebrew way of conceiving God. Still less did the Jahvism of the post-exilian Hebrews, though improving in some ways on the old Chaldean mythology, substitute a new method. And

we can no longer set off the Hebrews from other more Oriental branches of the Semitic family, in respect of theistic beliefs, as a supremely chosen people, with gifts to humanity of a wholly new and specially providential kind. To abandon this error is the grand edict issued to religious thought from the new-risen tablets of Nineveh and Babylon.

The result of these Genesis-studies may be briefly stated. The religious mythology of the Hebrews, rooted primarily in an old Chaldean and Semitic fund of legend, and the national aspiration for an exclusive deity, were worked over, under an influence which intensified the longing for national independence by a bitter sense of loss, and at the same time expanded their vision and gave it philosophical and historic direction. This influence came from Babylon, in the exile. Here was a concourse of races which could not fail to inspire the idea of humanity as a whole. Here was a large historic, traditional, and poetic literature, from which the Hebrew annalists and psalmists drew much of their tone as well as material.[1] Here were legends of the origin of things, of divine purposes, of penalties for sin, of physical and moral conditions, and of national destiny. Here, as their whole subsequent record shows, the tribes had opportunity to learn spiritual discipline and the devoutness of resignation and trust, and to fit themselves for world-wide service in the realm of religious culture. We may even say that at Babylon began their literary sense as well as their ecclesiastical organization. Here they dropped their Hebrew tongue and assumed the Aramaic, in the sixth century before Christ. Here was adopted the astrological and demonic imagery of the book of Daniel, so fertile for their future apocalyptic writing. Here the spectacle of the rise and fall of empires taught them a kind of uni-

[1] Schrader (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, Augsburg, June 19, 1874).

versality in theoretic scope, without disturbing that intense self-consciousness which made them interpret all history as centring in themselves. In the Chaldean exile originated that strange mixture of opposites which imposed itself on the world as the one only true philosophy of historic providence, and which has had its day in the Christian method of constructing history around a chosen people and a personal Messiah. Instead of finding the evolution of human nature in history, this providential Judaism saw simply an omnipotent personal Will working on mankind and shaping its destinies in the interest of the Hebrew tribes; while the modern method, still the orthodox one, as in Bossuet's day, differs from it only in changing the objective point of the same set of events and data, and so using them as to make the providential Will act, not in their interest as tribes, but in the interest of a Hebrew-born human God, whose claims they declined to accept. The theories of religious authority and divine government which have predominated in Christendom down to the present moment, the recognized foundations of theology and solutions of life and the world, we repeat, began to take shape and direction in the experience of the Hebrew exiles by the rivers of Babylon, weeping when they remembered Zion, their harps hung on the willows. Accursed Babylon was the mother of Christianity.

These beliefs enter naturally into the history of human development; they represent a maturing stage in the evolution of religion considered as the worship of personal Will. This is the key to their imperfections, their want of universality, their rejection by science. This worship of individual Will is the real substance of the exclusive and jealous claims of the ancient Hebrews, — of their nomadic hatred of other races settled in their habits and regulated by laws. This explains their substitution of arbitrary commandment for rational freedom; their superstitions

concerning divine rewards and penalties; their dread of knowledge as a religious trespass; their fear of the Gentile as one under curse, or as ignorant of the conditions of safety.

The Genesis-legends which grew out of these elements are found to lack simplicity and spontaneity; to be a mixture of myth and dogma, and evident elaborations of early and largely Chaldean materials for special apologetic purposes, — such as justifying the institution of the Sabbath, the right of man over woman, the exclusion of foreign races from divine favor, the claim of Jahveh to do according to his will. Even Lenormant admits in his elaborate discussion of their origin, that the writers availed themselves of myths already prevalent in the nations around them for dogmatic purposes, to represent more strongly the violence of the iniquity of the world outside. But we shall not explain their origin in human nature by merely detecting their errors. Behind these are moral and spiritual facts, which history has here, as elsewhere, been constructed to meet and illustrate, — the demand of the religious nature of man for a solution of the problems of his experience, for reconcilement to the conditions of existence and the order of the universe; the demand of his nature for a philosophy of history, for a concentration of motives on some central truth, for unitary movement in human progress; demands which from age to age find new meanings, but always testify to the common nature and aim of man.

More definitely, these antique gropings of imagination and faith, with all their dross of hatred, desire, and fear, are outgrowths of the conscience, — of the eternal dread of penalty, natural and personal, when the soul is under consciousness of evil doing; of the ideal in man when he reflects on the defect of promised good, conceived as somewhat for which he was born, and whose loss is a fall

from Paradise; of the infection of evil in man and Nature, giving the aspect of a poetic justice to deluges, fratricides, and the shortening of human life; and of the hardship of toil, — sole inevitable condition of wisdom and success.

Realities like these, not mere word-changes nor solar phenomena, are what construct myths, make Bibles, found religions. In the crudities of their early history and the persistent illusions of maturer ages, there is no more powerful agent than the fears and hopes involved in the worship of personal Will.

POLITICAL FORCES.

I.

BABYLON, CYRUS, PERSIA.

BABYLON, CYRUS, PERSIA.

THE foregoing section has given some idea of the complexity of those race-qualities that were to be gathered up by the Persian empire into a dynamic basis for the civilizations of the West. All the nerve-fibres of historic force were in fact converging into one massive ganglionic centre, of whose coming energy that spray of races dashed by the will of Xerxes over heroic Greece gave but a feeble and transient sign.

The Babylonian Chaldeans called themselves the nation of the Four Tongues; and we have seen that they contained Semitic, Turanian, and Cushite elements, probably Aryan also. The "mixed multitude" that thronged the streets of Babylon furnished food for the imagination of Greek dramatists[1] and Hebrew mythologists and prophets. Even Egyptian features are visible through the dusky civilization of the Euphrates valley. The cuneiform records of Assyrian conquests astonish us by the immense number and variety of tribes that had reached distinct names and fames at so early a period, and were swept into subjection to a common master. Nineveh was substantially Semitic in her religious and sensuous intensity, in her passion for the universal sway of her national gods, and in her concentrated worship of personal Will. Then came the semi-Aryan Mede, — not Aryan, for the Medes were largely Turanian, the very name of their country being a proof of it; and the Aryans were but a dominant class, — one of six classes, as Herodotus tells us. Oppert even considers the

[1] Aeschylus: *Persæ.*

great Median kings, whose history he records, beginning with Deïoces, the founder of the State, as of the Turanian race. A hardy mountain people, for two centuries subject to Assyria, bursts in on the overgrown giant, spread out, inert and loose, and, after hurling aside with barbaric treachery hordes of purely destructive Scythian intruders, shapes the elements into that first great international bond of fellowship in human history, — the League of Lydia, Media, and Babylonia, 610 B. C.

This Median empire was but a flash of nerve-lightning. It lasted less than a century; but when it had passed by, the nations were found possessed, like iron-filings beneath a magnet, by a stupendous force of coalescence. The full organization of these materials, which Semitic Assyria bent on conquest only could not begin to effect, even semi-Aryan Media had to transmit to a mightier hand. The function of the Mede was, with a Turanic *élan*, to break up the fixed soil, and to open channels for a more creative fire. This was not difficult, for the confluence of nations was but mechanical, and without organic relations. Herodotus tells us that Nineveh fell, not from internal strife nor decay, but by the revolt and desertion of her allies; and the cuneiform tablets record one incessant struggle to hold together an empire always crumbling at every point. Cyaxares the Mede, we are told, was the first really to organize an Asiatic army, combining the confused hordes which mere conquest brought together. He was a great personality, and Median history centres in him. But the main function of the Mede was to introduce the Persian, first absorbing the little kingdom of Achæmenes, then in turn being absorbed by his descendant, the great Cyrus. He must decrease, that the returning Achæmenide might increase. He came and went, leaving no trace. The wooden pillars of his palaces speedily perished;[1] his

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 265–277.

sculptures disappeared, and but one broken lion remains to tell their story;[1] his towns were few and unwalled; he left no literature, no record of his origin, no permanent institutions. His principal record is in a few monumental carvings and scattered notices by writers of other countries. These indeed retain some shadowy image of the fleeting world-master, like the filmy outlines of primeval sea-rovers, which we sometimes find tenderly spared by Nature through her metamorphosis of rocks. Recent researches, too, seem to indicate that the Magi of Herodotus, whom it is no longer possible to identify with the Mazdean fire-priest (*Âthrava*), represented the old religion of the Turanian Medes, especially its demonology, in many respects antagonistic to the Persian faith, which the conspiracy of Gomates, the pseudo-Smerdis, under lead of these Magi, succeeded for a time in striking down.

The Medes, it must also be observed, maintained their language, in spite of Aryan dominion, through the reigns of the greatest Achæmenidan kings; and Darius held it in such honor as to give it precedence of the Assyrian, in the great trilingual inscription in which he recounted his exploits to his subject States. These are signs of an energetic national life, however brief its glory, and make plausible enough the features which we may gather from Greek history to construct their portrait. Tall, handsome, graceful, merciless, and brave, the compact troop of "horse-archers" swept down from their mountains, to pierce the Ninevite armor with their long spears, and open ways for a more vigorous life. There is a fine ease of movement in these irresistible cavaliers, who touch their appointed handwork with the free grace of their own fluted caps, or of the pillared arcades which they introduced into Oriental art, — a large genial handling, typified in their taking the colors sacred to the five planets and the sun and moon to make

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 321.

a rainbow of their city walls; a firmness of grasp which has become proverbial as a synonym for inexorable laws, and a consciousness of authority that well fitted them to be heralds of the centralizing power of personal Will,—as appears in what Herodotus and Strabo tell us of their haughty kings, who were not to be approached even by prostration, and who withdrew at their pleasure into despotic seraglios where eunuchs kept guard.

The religious motor of modern civilizations has been the worship of personality. It is natural to find their springs in that succession of Asiatic empires, each of which was the sudden triumph of some petty tribe, forcing its way to power over the mass by its individual compactness and unity, and by the inspiration of a definite aim. The course of the present chapter will amply illustrate this law ot history.

Even Babylon revives from her subjection to Assyria at the touch of the Mede, and for a little while wields a sway wider than either over the ferment of nations. Again the pregnant atom of personal purpose rules the chaos of tendencies: the smallest of States holds the mass by its magnetic force. But, unlike the Mede, the Babylonian embodied in himself the whole substance of these ethnic elements in their finest forms, — as history, tradition, institution, accumulated mental resource.

His rise to supremacy, therefore, as we have already said, shows the scope of that prophetic construction which was going on in the Iranian world. The Babylonian kings, all gathered up at last into one speech, one apparel, one record of arrow-head syllables, are of many races. Berosus tells of Arabian, Chaldean, Median, Semite dynasties. Many of their names are still linguistic riddles, and some (such as Hammurabi) point to races now unknown. They had found room in their pantheon for all the older gods, every one the ideal of some tribe of men. It is no

longer an adventurous troop of warriors taking in hand a decaying empire, but a vast historic result, gathering into imperial personality the arts and sciences of a thousand years of growth, and the product of interfused races and religions, temples and priesthoods, on an unexampled scale, and in possession of a literature that summed up the wisdom of the race,—an industrial achievement surpassing all that Asia had known; a passion for national construction far beyond the Assyrian, and culminating in Nebuchadnezzar's reconstruction of every historical monument, city, or great canal in the Babylonian land; its metropolis with the full dimensions of a State, with an area of two hundred square miles, condensing the commerce, wealth, and religion of a hemisphere. Babylon, "hammer of the nations," forcing their tributes before her feet, and their hordes into her legions, was infinitely more; she was mother of arts to the teachers of Phidias and Apelles, the builders of Athens and Italy. She guaranteed that not one gift or tendency in them all should be lost, not one acquisition of humanity fail of circulating through coming time. Babylon, "key of history," was the prophecy of unity, of culture, of universal religion. Nebuchadnezzar, in the Hebrew legend cast down among the beasts for his pride, was not proud enough to boast, or even to know, the grandeur of his function among men.

Observe again what it is that controls the elements to ends beyond itself or them. Personal will has here almost reached its absolute form, so far as the monarch's power is concerned. Another master is yet to come, with greater genius for sway, because it is the genius of a whole tribe concentrating its forces in one man. Babylonian autocracy rests on religion; Persian, on self-conscious gift and positive culture. Nebuchadnezzar is Merodach; Nabonidus is Bel. Every royal name is here a compound of gods and the dealings of gods with men.

Even the rage that tore and the heel that crushed the nations were but conditions of this personal sway, by which direction was given to the thought and faith of coming ages; and in the succeeding European civilizations, whose central force has been always some factor in the worship of will-power, have not these Babylonian conditions of such worship, in one or another form, maintained their ground?

In spite of that remorseless indictment by the Hebrew prophets, echoed by the Christian seer, which have made this queen of Western Asia a hissing on the lips of ages, the strongest unconscious testimony to the significance of her work comes from these enemies themselves. On the one hand, the prophets have nothing to charge against her of which they do not confess that their own people were guilty to the full extent of their power. The pseudo-Jeremiah's[1] picture of Babylon's licentiousness and idolatry is surpassed by Ezekiel's description of the abominations of Jerusalem of that day,[2] and pales before the mournful confessions of the later Isaiah in the name of his rescued nation. Nevertheless, the Hebrew asserted the unaltered claim of these desperate rebels to be the children of Jahveh's mercies and the future crown of his rejoicing,[3] while Babylon had forfeited the right to live. On the other hand, Jeremiah, noblest of the prophets, who dared to speak his mind in face of princes and priests on the meaning of public events, who, undismayed by foul dungeon or patriotic rage, denounced the great national crime of re-enslaving freemen, and launched Jahveh's thunders at the head of a cruel and treacherous king, and who outlived the charge of treasonable sympathy with the foreigner, to find his insight justified by the course of events, — this one statesman

[1] The denunciation of Babylon (chaps. l., li.) at the close of his prophecies belongs to a period after his death, and is manifestly the work of a later hand.

[2] Ezekiel, viii. xvi. xxii.

[3] Ibid., xx. 33-44.

among the prophets has nothing but welcome and honor for the Chaldean city, as Jahveh's avenger and the appointed refuge of his people.

Not till the tread of the Persian marching to Babylon's destruction broke on the Hebrew ear, was Jeremiah's name used by another to pull down the honorable prestige he had built up for her; not till then do we hear of the "golden cup" that has made the nations drunk and mad, whose end is come, and the measure of whose covetousness is full, inhabited only by hyenas and owls. It was the Hebrew's way to construct events when they had passed into fulfilment as inspired predictions of his own absolutism.

But none other than the prophet himself whose lips were glowing with the grandest gospel of political and religious liberty that stands between the lids of the Bible, — "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," [1] — none other than he it was who said to foolish kings, in the same great Name, Behold, I have given all these lands into the hand of the king of Babylon, *my servant*, and the nation that will not serve him will I punish with the sword. Hearken not to lying prophets, but serve the king of Babylon and live.[2] And to the captives from Jerusalem, "Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried, . . . and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." [3] "Jahveh's sword is in his hand," says Ezekiel, too, of the Chaldean, "and Pharaoh's arm shall be broken." [4]

[1] Jeremiah, xxxi. 33, 34. [2] Ibid., xxvii. [3] Ibid., xxix.

[4] Ezekiel, xxx. In the Talmud the Jewish Rabbins ascribe the destruction of Jerusalem to the neglect of popular education and the decay of schools (Schaff, 119); also to the stern literalism with which the law was executed, to the neglect of its milder spirit. (B. Meziah, 306.)

And what, after all, was the special offence of a people from whom Jahveh was bringing deliverance to the debased tribes, and from whom was to come their full fruition? "Because ye rejoiced and exulted, O ye plunderers of my inheritance, because ye wantoned like a thrashing heifer and neighed like a stallion, your mother is utterly confounded; she that bore you is put to shame." "Because she hath exalted herself against Jahveh, . . . therefore shall her young men fall in her streets, and nothing of her be left;" because also the years of captivity had gone on, as Jeremiah had predicted they would, and still "the oppressor" refused to let "his people" go.[1] In short, it was because the national God of the Hebrews was ignored and set aside, that their religious zeal dared to put upon the dead lips of Jeremiah himself those invented directions to his disciple, to cast his "book of the woes of Babylon" into the Euphrates, bound to a stone, saying, "Even so shall Babylon sink and rise no more."[2]

And yet it is from their own admissions that we learn to ascribe to this "oppressor" a treatment singularly generous and kind. The later romance of Daniel gives evidence at least that the Babylonians exercised a hospitality, religious and intellectual, unequalled in any other State; that their sovereign was accustomed to seek out unblemished men from foreign lands, skilled in all outside wisdom and science, so that the learning of the Chaldeans might be sown in choice soil for public service;[3] and that he had the insight to discern in a Hebrew youth abilities beyond all his astrologers and magicians, and liberality to reward him with the highest official station.[4] If this native culture is denounced as sorcery, let us not forget that Daniel himself was but another among the king's inter-

[1] Jeremiah, l.
[2] Ibid., li.
[3] Daniel, i. 4.
[4] Ibid., ii. 48; vi. 3.

preters of dreams. In the same way it accorded with later Hebrew associations to represent Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, — the Pharaoh and the Messiah of the national exile, — as alike converted to the worship of Jahveh, and to sound their praises in the language of the national psalms.[1] Surely there was more justice in this acknowledgment than in the bitter complaints of oppression that broke out from the exiles, when they heard the advancing tramp of the Persian host, — "Woe to the spoiler, who showed no mercy, proud against the Holy One of Israel! She shall be snared and taken, so that none shall escape; she shall be dealt with according to her works."[2] Nor can we help accounting for the later Isaiah's tender wail over Israel in exile, "as a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," by the long-pent feeling of national thraldom, rather than by any special severities on the part of the master. But this indignation found freer vent in the later Hebrew legend, where Babylon figures, to meet the exigencies of an anti-Syrian passion, as a nest of cruelties and idolatries, a fiery furnace for the martyrs of Israel's God, a haunt of lying priests, who befool king and people till Daniel outwits them; the throne of a dragon-god, till the same prophet chokes him with a bolus to prove him mortal; a den of lions for a prophet, who is fed by one brought from Judea by the hair of his head, till the tyrant, who is no other than Cyrus himself, is forced to confess the Hebrew God.[3]

It is easy to understand that religious exclusiveness should combine in this way with patriotic wrath, especially when we remember the despondency of the Jews after the exile, at Jahveh's failure to bring the promised Messianic age. But Babylon was not the persecutor of nations and faiths; it was their gathering-place, and the germinal

[1] Ezra, i 2-4. [2] Jeremiah, l. 29.
[3] See Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament.

point of their unity. As Jeremiah had counselled the exiles to pray for the peace of Babylon, so Ezekiel's conferences with their elders show that they were allowed to retain their civil and religious institutions, governed by a chief of their own, although by his own testimony they were altogether unworthy of the privilege.[1] The exiles were not only protected in life and property, they were represented at court. Nehemiah was royal cup-bearer. Jehoiachin, their imprisoned prince, was released and treated with distinguished honor.[2] They increased in numbers, and while three times as many persons were ready to return, upon the permission of Cyrus, as had been carried away two generations before, the large and influential number of those who stayed in Babylonia, notwithstanding the exertions of Ezra and his friendly coadjutors in literary and legislative activity, is a proof of the strong root that had been struck in the peace and prosperity of their Chaldean home. Nor could the patriots fairly complain of the manner in which the interests of their country were looked after by the conquerors. Gedaliah was doubtless the best governor who could have been appointed for Judea, and his foul murder by his own countrymen was anything but encouraging to royal benefactions. The free choice of Zerubbabel and Jeshua as leaders of the return was no better sign of the friendship of Cyrus than of the normal condition of Hebrew institutions in the land of exile. How prodigious the contrast with their utter degradation and the ruin of the Palestinian remnant and the fugitives in Egypt, a glance at the record shows. Never did a people exhibit less political capacity under difficult relations with their stronger neighbors than did these children of an exclusive religious zeal upon their own soil. Nothing but the crash that flung their quivering fragments into the fostering arms of a

[1] Ezekiel, xx. 33-38; xxiii.

[2] Jeremiah, lii. 31.

hated foreign civilization like the Persian, highly regulated and organized, whose very success stimulated them with mingled mortification and hope, saved those germs of future influence upon human history that lay hidden in their very self-isolation. The secret of their tragic destiny is revealed in that seething of undisciplined passions which mingled in one volcanic outbreak against Babylon the tenderest pathos of homesick exiles and the merciless rage of savages. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. O daughter of Babylon! happy shall he be who dasheth thy little ones against the stones."[1]

When the returning exiles have come under Ezra's Law in their own land they are a new people; properly for the first time a people; possessed by a conviction of national and religious unity, due in no slight measure to the stimulus of the exile and return. Jahveh is now the centre of the one national ritual. Israel, the servant of God, suffers for the popular sins, redeemer of the world. How they put away their very wives and children in the name of national duty! A more or less permanent written constitution has been accepted, whose main peculiarity is a compromise between the two elements until then existing in sharp antagonism,—the prophetic and the priestly. Both are in fact transformed; and while the ecclesiastical system becomes far more hierarchical and vicarious in form, the prophetic has lost its individual inspiration, is recognized as having no more the old fire which had glorified the days of tribal discord, but is diffused more widely in the popular mind in a spirit of reaction against the exclusiveness and pride of the second Temple, and in an increase of religious and national enthusiasm fostered by the instructions of the scribes. The Temple of Jerusalem is now, as vainly proposed by Josiah, the only place of

[1] Psalm, cxxxvii.

Jahveh's presence; the law is a systematic ritual; the old Levitical rights to priesthood are suppressed as punishment for the national sin of free worship on the high places, while the sons of Aaron are exalted into an exclusive hierarchy, a high-priest of mediatorial dignity at their head,[1] splendid in dress as in function, with sacrifices, vows, festivals reorganized in their interest.[2] The sorrows of the exile have intensified religious nationality, or, we may say, created it in the form of an aristocracy. Yet, on the other hand, this very official and aristocratic spirit compelled a certain democratic quality, a free many-sidedness, in which lay the germs of the Maccabean heroes, of Hillel and Jesus, of Essenic sainthood, of the moral and philosophical sublimities scattered through the ecclesiasticism of the Apocrypha, of the free doubts and varying dogmatic questioning of the "Preacher" and the Son of Sirach, of the lawless treatment of historic facts and laws by the Chronicler, of the stimulating strife of factions in Asmonean times, of the growth of sects and of those Greek sympathies of Herodian times which did so much to counteract the legalism of the church, and, especially, of the efforts to escape anthropomorphic views of deity, which appear both in Judea and Alexandria. The epoch bore the noblest poetry in the psalms of the Temple, full of popular love and longing for its holiness; while the Persian satrap and the remoteness of the Temple of Jahveh's presence, aided by the synagogues spread over the land, could not but combine to foster local independence and protest.

Moreover the Law itself, in its reformations, brought with it a sense of national remorse which made it provide for many wants and claims of the masses. Contrast Nehemiah's Sabbatarian bigotry and his rage against mixed marriages with his rebukes of rich usurers and his release of poor debtors from their hands. Note the limitations

[1] Zechariah, vi. 9–15.

[2] Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, ii. 259.

set in the post-exilian law to the blood-avenger's rights and powers,[1] and the scheme for a Sabbatical jubilee-year of release from debts and alienations of land, with the many laws facilitating redemption.[2] These humanities stand in relief against the many barbarous injunctions inspired by the fear of heathen interference with the separation of the holy nation to Jahveh.[3] When we read the grand humanities of Malachi and the later Isaiah, who wrote upon the eve of the great national metamorphosis, we cannot help thinking that these last and grandest utterances of the prophetic spirit point not only backward to the expanding and softening influences of the exile, but forward to those noble landmarks of universality, — the books of Jonah and of Ruth. Between these stands the whole distinctive Levitical legislation into which Hebrew tradition and life, from the old free tribal usages[4] through the Deuteronomic reformation, crystallized at last, as ecclesiasticism does crystallize, — traced by the keen analysis of recent scholarship to the labors of the Babylonian Jews of the exile, beginning with Ezekiel, but mainly after the first emigration of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, during the eighty years between 538 and 458 B. C., and even later, at Jerusalem itself. Here, as well as previously at Babylon, Ezra and his companions were compiling, constructing, collating his Book of Laws[5] for the use of the new people of Jahveh, for whom these scribes saw in a regulated priestly ritualism the nationality required.[6] They did their best to join these to the old, forgotten, and the recognized statutes and usages of the land; but they did not scruple to alter and add to these very largely, always in the interest of ecclesiastical centralization and authority.[7] For them the

[1] Numbers, xxxv. 9–34.
[2] Leviticus, xxv. 1–7.
[3] See Numbers, xxxi. 49.
[4] Exodus, xxi.–xxiii.
[5] Levitical *Book of Origins* (Ewald).
[6] See Kuenen, ii. 152, 153, 233.
[7] So the author of Chronicles, who seeks to give Davidic authority to their later ecclesiastical laws.

great age of the prophets was dead and gone. It had not united Israel, nor saved her. The age of written law must come; of the hedges of the scribe about it, and the right of the priest to administer it. Yet see what lessons the rude Hebrews must have learned at Babylon, what breadth even in hating and repelling what was too great for them to ignore; and how the Persian universalism followed them up in the edict commanding Ezra "to instruct all the people in the laws of their God." [1] Of the influence of Zoroastrianism itself in the hundred years of Persian sway over Judea we shall speak elsewhere; Babylonia is our present subject.

These Hebrews have learned the arts, traditions, literature of an ancient and great civilization. Their priests and prophets have been working out, amid these large resources, a reconstruction of their nomadic mythology, a systematic religious code and ritual which shall reconcile the differences of their past and present, of their formal and spiritual elements, and bind in one meaning the Elôhîm of their fathers and the Jahveh of their faith. Nothing is more manifest in their post-exilian literature, unreliable as it is, than the purpose to give unity to their history by making these two names of deity, which represent distinct stages in the growth of the religious idea, completely interchangeable. And this they did so successfully, that the words probably conveyed no more suggestion of difference than we find in the terms "God" and "the Lord," by which they are respectively rendered in the English Bible. They were even joined in a single title, *Jahveh-Elôhîm*, the "Lord God." There can be no surer sign of cosmopolitan experience in a people than the effort to give unity to their religious history. To gather up all its germinal stages into an ideal purpose, is a step which involves previous intercourse with larger forms of

[1] Ezra, vii. 25.

civilization. And this result of the captivity was the opening for constructions of universal history, like those in Daniel and the Apocryphal books, as well as in the ethnic genealogical table of Genesis;[1] all of which, however marred by national and ecclesiastical exclusiveness, at least indicates that this was giving way to a supreme interest in human history as a whole. For this pregnant education of Judaism, Christianity, its offspring, should credit the much-abused banks of "the river of Chebar." We may maintain that the age of prophecy was dead; but after all, till the day of the exile the Hebrew prophet was, with all his moral ardor and protest, truculent, narrow, and extravagant, extremely wild and irrational. There, as the exile sat and mused, were opened larger heavens than those of Ezekiel's vision or Ezra's priestly ritualizing. The whole future of his people shaped itself then among the heathen laws and hospitable liberties he held accursed. No one could condense the evidences of this stimulating influence better than Dean Stanley has done in one sentence in his "History of the Jewish Church,"—"The captivity bore the greatest of Hebrew prophets, the chief of Hebrew scribes, the founder of Hebrew law, the fathers of Hebrew literature." Ezekiel is possessed with the picture of Israel's history. His lamentations over this, and his tracing out through all, of Jahveh's justice, is the earliest great construction of national history on moral and religious principles,—of a Divine administration of affairs, and of the supreme authority of a personal Will. The interpretation of the Law by the best collected mind of the nation was substituted for the dogmatism of the prophet; the constitution of the theocracy for the arbitrariness of kings and priests.

But a greater social and political renewal than any of these must be noted. There in prevailing Pârsî customs,[2]

[1] Genesis, chap. x. [2] Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, iii. 35.

we may add, began the democratic element in Hebrew religious forms, — the recognition of the human element in the law for the instruction of the people, the Sabbath meeting in the synagogue, the expansive legal studies of the Scribes and growth of the oral law, the public assemblies called to reconstitute nationality,[1] and the reshaping of the old prophecies and histories. So also began there the devout listening to the history of Jahveh's dealing with their fathers,[2] the public reading of the Law, and the freer interpretation of the Scriptures that bore such a leading part in the origins of Christianity when the Scribes had overcome the priestly power, degenerating indeed into the narrowness of the later Palestinian sects, but holding its own in that larger survey of principles which distinguished Babylonian from Judean Talmudists, and which afterward suffered from Judean narrowness as did early Christianity.[3]

To Babylon, then, the Hebrews owed their later language, calendar, and religious imagery; but, above all, an expansion of mind, a historic sense; germs of universality, hopes of national life, an emotional experience of sorrow and faith that was no less than a change of heart, and which flowed forth in psalms of resignation and aspiration, of humble trust and spiritual yearning, of noble purpose and happy praise. Here the nation saw, through its old and now established rite of slaughtered rams, even by reaction against this ritualism to the nobler meanings of sacrifice, in the heroic sainthood that suffered for the sake of all, the pious servant of God, the true Israel of exile, who was bruised for the iniquities of his people, and by whose stripes they were healed. Here in the hospitable shadow of a great empire they grew into that home-trust which could after-

[1] Nehemiah, viii. 10; Ezra, ix. 6–15.
[2] Nehemiah, ix. 5.
[3] Geiger: *Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte*, ii. 31, 32. Mühlfelder: *Rabh. ein Lebensbild zur Gesch. d. Talmud.*

wards say, "He who emigrates from Babylon to Jerusalem commits a crime, breaks a command."[1] Here had indeed been, and here was again to be, when eight or ten centuries had passed, in the great age of Talmudic teaching, and under many of the Persian Sassanidæ, through the Christian persecutions of Constantine and Justinian, a Harbor of Refuge, such as Judaism could not find elsewhere in the civilized world. That the Jews themselves were in some degree conscious of their debt of gratitude, for a time at least, appears from the refusal of the high-priest to transfer the national loyalty from Darius to Alexander after his great victories over the Persian king.[2]

It has been too long the fashion to see this great historic city in the lurid light of Hebrew denunciations, and to regard its destruction as evidence at once of prophetic inspiration and of the wrath of the God of the Bible against national iniquity. The absorption or passing away of States is not a penalty for their sins, any more than their expansion is the reward of their virtues. Without disparaging the part played by moral forces in the movement of civilization, we must regard historical conditions as quite too complicated to be reduced to a mere formula of ethical retribution. A Hebrew who ascribed the overthrow of Jerusalem to the corruption of Jahveh-worship, might as well have pretended that the extension of Nebuchadnezzar's sway was due to the virtues of his people; and he would then have had, in consistency, to demonstrate that these same virtuous Babylonians had been transformed in half a century into criminals fit only for the destroyer! This logical continuity was wanting to the Hebrew mind, which ascribed the success or failure of the chosen nation to the terms on which they stood with their God, while it failed to accord the same condi-

[1] Jost: *Gesch. d. Judent.*, iv. 305. Also Milman's *History of the Jews*, chap. xxi.
[2] Josephus: *Antiquities of the Jews*, xi. 8, § 3.

tions to the heathenism that lay outside of his law. The simple fact was that the petty tribe of Judah could not resist the conquerors of the world. Science has taught us that the limits of a nation's existence and growth are determined by conditions of climate, position, and race; by its relative strength and sagacity; by the currents of civilization, opening or closing paths to power; and by the fortunes of war. Probably no great people was ever so utterly demoralized as to owe its destruction to war alone. The Roman Empire was enervated by self-indulgence. But its conquerors from the northern wildernesses were not models of virtue; and the Rome that could not withstand their blows could at least live an after-life in the conquest of their brutality by her culture and her law. Surely it was not owing to the vices of Rome that horde after horde of barbarians pressed like waves on one another till they overflowed Europe with a physical force that no moral energy could have withstood. The consequences of slavery were certainly sapping the unity of the empire; but so overgrown a dominion must have fallen to pieces by lack of central authority, and by the restlessness of the tribes it sought to hold, even if its provincial administration had been far better than it was. Like all great cities, Babylon doubtless had her share of luxury, covetousness, and crime; perhaps the pictures drawn by Hebrew prophet and Latin historian are within the truth; but to say that for this reason her glory was turned to "heaps" is to forget all the elements of the situation save one. It is to ignore the immeasurable part she has borne in human history, both before and after her visible downfall. It must be remembered that her vices did not prevent her from being, at that very moment, famous throughout Asia for the valor and energy of her campaigns; that a less skilful and fortunate foe than Cyrus would probably have failed to force her enormous defences, which were only carried

by a stratagem played on the effeminacy not of the people, but of the court. With all their excesses, the Babylonians had won repute for honesty and self-possession;[1] and the earnestness of their religious faith and public spirit is shown by their prodigious works and by the inscriptions of their kings. That a city which held from an unknown antiquity down to the last moment of its existence the rank of mistress in commerce and culture,—a metropolis to which all the great roads of Asia converged, and from which the wealth of the Euphrates and Tigris flowed down through the great Persian Gulf to the ocean highway of the ancient world; "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency;" a city that could build walls fifty miles in circumference, and terraced gardens on a similar scale, upheld by columns and watered by hydraulic engines, and river-walls and piers to match them; that combined every known form of industrial achievement and productive craft; the confluence of all races, the home of all beliefs,—that such a city became "heaps" because of its moral and religious rottenness is simply incredible, and would, if true, make it absurd to expect anything from the highest capacities of mankind. Sodoms and Gomorrahs on such a scale are preposterous. The denouncers of Babylon were rebuked in after days by the legend of Jahveh's own promise to Abraham, that ten righteous men were enough to save a city;[2] and by his plea with Jonah, "Thou hast had pity on the gourd which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?"

Whatever its morals, Babylon would doubtless have continued for ages to be the centre of Asiatic civilization, had

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 508.

[2] Genesis, xviii. 32.

not Alexander's plans for its restoration been cut short by death; had not the Persians, at a later time, in their fear of invasion by sea, broken the connection between the Tigris and the Persian Gulf; had not, still later, the discovery of an ocean passage to India destroyed that land traffic of which Babylon was the *entrepôt*, and which our own days are bringing afresh into its ancient track. The vices of Belshazzar's semi-mythic court had less to do with Babylon's desolation than the removal of the Achæmenidan seat of empire to Susa, and the change from Chaldean culture to Persian military ambition in Western Asia, which required a new metropolis and a new basis of nationality. Still more conclusive against the Bible-theory is the actual record of Babylon's influence on universal history, — on the one hand direct and visible, on the other indirect and invisible; of Babylon after the flesh, and Babylon in the spirit. What if her undisputed mastery of the Asiatic world lasted less than a century? It was long enough to gather the scattered lights of past ages into one flame, and transmit to the next master of nerve-power in this process of historic growth what he would never have had the philosophy to concentrate, nor the patience to search out; long enough to mingle the physical stamina and crude capacity of a hundred heterogeneous tribes with the best organic life of wealth and culture that had then been attained, — and thus to make Greece, Judea, Arabia, and through them Europe and America, her unceasing debtors.

Babylon became "heaps;" but when a thousand years have passed over those "heaps," antiquity itself arises out of them, and holds forth the lost fragments of history that prove humanity an unbroken evolution, a movement to universal ends. When Ker Porter's troop first approached the mound of Birs-Nimrud, they saw its desolate summit in possession of three magnificent lions, who moved majes-

tically away at their approach, as if to reprove those nurslings of the ages for forgetting that Babylon, though a shadow, was still a throne for kings.[1]

It has hardly been imagined to what extent Persian civilization was the product of Babylonian elements. A loose congeries of nations, apparently with nothing in common but the tendency to rebellion and separation, were transmitted by Nabonidus to Cyrus, whose hands were so full of conquests that he did little towards shaping political order out of their fruits. But he received more than this chaos of tendencies. We have traced through the Iranian past an energetic germ of unity, in the pressure of ideal motive into immediate act, which I have characterized as nerve-power. The main spring of this energy of purpose could be found only in personal Will. This was its earliest ideal in the East, as it is its latest inspiration in Western society and faith. Its advent on an ethnic scale was in that Iranian exaltation of royal personages, as actual or expectant masters of the world through force of will, of which it is a popular error to suppose that Cyrus and his successors were the founders. It was Iranian, before it was Persian. First noted by the Greeks in the hosts precipitated on Europe by the nod of the king, it was yet, as we have seen, the motive-force of those great empires which had preceded his. The leader of a troop of mountaineers, Cyrus proved,—like the Assyrian, the Mede, the Babylonian before him, only with far greater emphasis,—that personal quality is master of mere human mass. The immense power that belonged to this conviction was already a tradition of these nations, ready to pass from hand to hand along the line of conquerors. So the spirit of

[1] Babylon, as the traveller sees it from the Birs-Nimrud to-day, is no desert. The date groves, palms, and mulberry trees, the beautiful gardens, magnificent crops, and far-spread irrigation, make the scene as lovely as possible, and serve as a benediction of Nature on a mighty historic mission long finished and fulfilled. (For description, see Geary's *Travels in Asiatic Turkey*, chap. xii.)

Nineveh and Babylon moved in the arm of Cyrus when it waved the dispersed Hebrews into national life, as when it chastised the river Gyndes for drowning a sacred horse; in the rage of Xerxes casting fetters into the Hellespont; in the self-invocation of every Achæmenidan on his stone tablets, as sole "King of kings; king by grace of Ormuzd, of this wide earth, afar and near." And at last Alexander himself, pupil of Greek liberty, conquers Persian Babylon only to assume the adored dress of Darius, to prescribe prostration at his own feet, and demand at Susa, even of the Greeks, that they should worship him as their god.

The Persian monotheist did but intensify the personal monarchism of the older worship when he substituted one sovereign will for the many gods in human form of the Semitic and Turanian pantheon, whom he smote into the dust. His symbol of Ormuzd, — a man flying in a winged circle over the king's head, — belonged to Asshur, the god of Assyria, before him. Here was a fit type of that nerve-energy and resistless will by which the Persians carried to a higher point the personal ideal of Nineveh and Babylon. So the winged human-headed bulls of these cities, of similar purport, and the monsters that had typified terrible powers of evil purpose, did but receive from the new dualism of spiritual forces a more practical and realistic form of the same meaning. The old Magian cultus of the elements, slowly built up by Cushite, Turanian, and Semite combined, was also transmitted to the Persians, who accepted its worship of fire, its divining rods, and perhaps its command to destroy noxious animals, and who practised at times, if we may believe Herodotus, its dreadful rite of human sacrifice. Even the Babylonian Venus, Anaitis,[1] found admission at a later period into the religion of these scourgers of idolatry, even among the suc-

[1] According to Haug, who refers to Windischmann (*Essays*, etc., p. 43), Anaitis is in the old Yashts of the *Avesta*.

cessors of that Cambyses who had stabbed the Egyptian Apis and overturned his shrine. They took their writing from the Assyrian cuneiform. Babylon furnished their system of coinage; Egypt and Media, their dress; and into their worship of Ormuzd they absorbed without change the Semitic gods of their subject States.[1]

Spiegel has traced many of the gods of the Zend-Avesta directly to older Semitic originals,[2] and it is but reasonable to believe that the civilization of western Iran, which Herodotus entitled Persian, was in fact the resultant of the manifold traditions and institutions deposited in succession on the soil. But Persia brought also her own gift, her distinctive function. As to what it was, we can judge better after a brief survey of what we know as to the origin and history of her people. On this matter the Hebrew Scriptures, until recently the principal guide as to the races of Western Asia, give very little information. The ram and the butting goat of the book of Daniel convey no idea of the difference of the Persian and Macedonian empires; nor do other Bibles throw much light on the origin of the tribe which Cyrus raised to the throne of Asia. Cuneiform inscriptions, as early as the ninth century before Christ, — if we are not deceived by a resemblance of names, as Schrader thinks we are, — have preserved the important fact that the "country of Par'sua" (Persia) contained a very great number of independent chiefs who submitted to the Assyrians.[3] This is about all we can learn from the stone-records, and the lively Greeks yield nothing but mythic names. The early legends of the Zend-Avesta, like those of the Hebrew Genesis, may cover the religious antagonism of nomadic and settled tribes, and the primeval warfare of their gods of night and

[1] Spiegel: *Studien uber d. Zend-Avesta* (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, ix. 178). Duncker: *Geschichte des Alterthums*, bd. ii. 626, 641. Herodotus, i. 135.

[2] *Erân. Alterth.*, bd. ii.

[3] Black obelisk Inscription of Shalmaneser II., and Inscription of Shamas Rimmon.

day; but, however ancient, these transformed traditions and names throw no light on the special facts of early Persian history. On the origin of the monarchy formed by union of the cognate tribes we have nothing but the name of Achæmenes, who is given in the inscription of Darius at Behistun, as the eponymous chief of his dynasty; though Darius speaks of himself as the ninth Achæmenidan king, which implies that there were five of the race before Achæmenes, the line having probably been interrupted by the conquest of Persia by the Medes.[1] Achæmenes therefore, if a real person, was not the founder of the monarchy, and we find no record as to who was. The Persian was more interested in recording how his "spear reached afar, seeking war far from his land," than in remembering his tribal origin, which was probably humble enough. We do not even know whether, previous to Cyrus, his country was a satrapy of Media, or a kingdom paying tribute, though that it was the former is by far the more probable. Herodotus relates the Median conquest, and brings Cyrus, through his mother, into the royal family, not of Persia, but of Media.[2]

Who, then, were the Persians? The only reply is,—a torrent which descended from its mountain home, and swept all Western Asia into its current almost at one bound, but left no record by which we can trace it to its springs. The typical race of Iran, the Persians, have given their name to its history at every phase; yet we do not even know whether this name comes from that of their principal tribe, or is the Greek form of the "Parsu" or "Bartsu" of the inscriptions. Of the Greek historians, our earliest informant, Herodotus, lived but a century after Cyrus; yet his account of that historic person is, by his own statement, but one of three ways of

[1] See Oppert's translation of the Behistun Inscription, and his note. *Records of the Past*, vii. 87

[2] Herodotus *vs*. Xenophon. Herodotus, i. 112.

telling the story, either of which he was at liberty to select, and is evidently to a great degree mythical. His authorities are Median and Babylonian, and he knows so little of the old Persian religion that he does not even mention Ormuzd or the two principles of the Avesta-faith, but describes a kind of element-cult instead, which is perhaps Magism, — a product of Turanian, Semitic, and Median beliefs. Nevertheless, he is the best existing authority, now that we know how to study his honest work. Ctesias, who wrote a century later, was a physician at the Persian court at Susa, and knew the traditions of the monarchy; but his reputation for honesty is very bad, and his credulity is beyond example. Xenophon, on the other hand, has given in his "Cyropædia" a splendid philosophical romance. Neither of these, nor any other author, can enlighten the darkness of Persian origins. Even the old heroic legend of Firdûsî, while it makes the local chiefs its theme, and describes the feudal liberties of the various States of a great confederacy, throws no special light on the Persians before Cyrus.

But Herodotus' straightforward picture of the Persians of Cyrus' time bears every mark of truth. It has never been contradicted; and it thoroughly explains their marvellous career. Only this makes us pause, — that the Persians whom he must have seen, the actual rulers of Western Asia, were obviously very different from the Persians of his picture. Did he really see at Babylon many of the conquering race? Was his account of them a tradition in the memories of the conquered people, not yet effaced by time? Or how otherwise could he have penetrated through the luxurious and barbarous degeneracy of the Persians of his day, — of which he was fully aware, since he refers it to the influence of Media, — to the ideal he gives us of a hardy mountain tribe, of rare modesty, dignity, and self-discipline, a national personality

so compact and resolute that it wrought on the feebler *morale* of the older races with the power of fate? The startling contrast to all this, revealed in Plutarch's Life of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the contemporary of Herodotus, renders it a puzzle to comprehend how the old ideal Persians could have been discerned except through traditional survival in the minds of their subjects. On the other hand, such a reputation speaks forcibly for the truth of the picture. And there are good grounds in the character of the historian why we should separate the psychological part of it from the mythological, and accord to the one a credence we must refuse to the other.

That the Persians of Cyrus were the ideal of all the Greek historians does not prove that the picture itself was purely ideal. Nothing but the force of truth seems likely to have extorted such tributes from a people who habitually regarded other races as barbarians, and who must have been specially jealous of the rapid rise to empire of a rude mountain tribe, whose arms were reaching down to the shores of the Ægean. The mingled contempt and fear felt by the Ionian cities toward this Iranian horde advancing upon them over the ruins of Nineveh is illustrated by the advice given to Crœsus by his courtiers, not to waste his time and labor in subjugating these poverty-stricken and worthless barbarians, who, once in Lydia, might do mischief.[1] But a stronger witness to the truth of Herodotus' tribute is found in certain vestiges of those hardy and heroic manners surviving in the well-known institutions of the later Achæmenide empire. Plutarch tells us that the kings of Persia at that period still ate figs and drank milk at their coronation, in memory of the ancestral customs of their race.[2] Xenophon, who may be trusted when he speaks of the Persians of his own day, says they still retained the robust educational principles and general

[1] Herodotus, i. 71. [2] *Life of Artaxerxes.*

institutions which he describes as those of Cyrus' time, but carried them out in a very perverted way; and he notices the continuance of many ancient customs, such as bringing only small-sized bottles to their feasts and making only one meal a day, which were managed so as to defeat their original purpose. He evidently follows the general tradition when he holds the luxury and cruelty of the court of Persia as all the worse for the heroic manners from which it had fallen away.[1] The rugged tribes devoted to their chiefs, led by Cyrus from their herds and hunting-grounds to startle the pampered Lydians, with their spare diet and clothing of skins, living on what they could get, strangers to wine and wassail, schooled in manly exercises, cleanly even to superstition, so loyal to age and filial duties that parricide was inconceivable to them, hating falsehood as something atrocious, may well be needed to explain certain subsequent traits which Herodotus has recorded of the Persians of his own time,[2] — their pride of personal independence, that held the owing of a debt the next worse thing to telling a lie, and despised the markets of Greek cities as schools of trickery;[3] their scorn of talking about things that ought not to be done; their care to wean their affections from over-dependence upon keeping their children under their own sight; the high honors they paid to their birthdays, and their esteem for another nation in proportion to its relationship to themselves; their fondness for social grades and regulated manners; their feudal dignities, the chiefs giving counsel to the king, even while thoroughly submissive to his person, just as Cyrus himself had been in these conferences but as *primus inter pares*, and laid before the Persian nobles his plan of rebellion against the Mede; the strong instinct of national importance and destiny, which grew naturally out of this personal

[1] *Cyropædia*, viii. 18.
[2] Herodotus, i. 138, 139.
[3] Ibid., i. 153.

pride and force of will, and which made every man a part of the public purpose, working and praying for the whole nation, and particularly for the king's welfare, esteeming prowess even beyond progeny; above all, their stirring ambition to lose themselves in the great world-current, owing partly to magnetic sympathy and passion for personal contact, and partly to the sense of guidance by a victorious star, so that they were "readiest of all nations to accept foreign customs," and became apt pupils of Median excess.[1]

It would seem that nothing but the palpable persistence of those qualities to which had been traced the victorious career of the early Persians could have caused the Greek writers to pay such tributes as they did to the later civilization of the empire, in spite of its equally palpable depravity. It was no doubt only in the line of Xenophon's fine fiction to represent this people as teaching their children virtues as those of other nations were taught letters;[2] but Herodotus, Plutarch, Strabo, Ctesias, Curtius, Ammianus, Josephus, all of whom professed to write genuine history, point us likewise to their laws against ingratitude, against capital punishment for a first offence or without trial, against harsh treatment of households;[3] to the custom of setting the services of a slave against his offences in deciding on his punishment; to that of sometimes substituting the dress of a culprit for his person in inflicting the penalty;[4] to that of deliberating on public matters over their cups, but deciding only when sober;[5] to their signal valor at Platæa and Mycale; to their habitual reward of brave and noble conduct, in both sexes alike; to the interpretation of law by appointed judges;[6] to their belief that nothing was so servile as lux-

[1] Herodotus, i. 132–136.
[2] *Cyropædia*, i. 2.
[3] Herodotus, i. 137.
[4] Brisson: *De Regno Persarum*, p. 593.
[5] Herodotus, i. 133.
[6] Brisson, pp. 191, 192.

ury, nothing so royal as toil; to their religious respect for promises,[1] — most of which had doubtless such practical validity as an absolute monarchy might allow.[2] But these writers have not failed to notice how the intense loyalty of the elder time had degenerated into servility so absolute that the king expected to be thanked by the subject for the punishment he inflicted, and injustice itself was scored by its victim as a benefit; [3] a servility that amounted to worship, and accepted death as the penalty for proposing anything which should displease the king.[4] They have faithfully recorded such atrocities as burying men alive in honor of the elements; flaying judges for bribery; mutilation and stoning; acts of the cruellest caprice; and the shameless crimes of a court life, where monsters of the harem, male and female, ruled with shocking facility the weakest and the wickedest of tyrants.

It may help to reconcile these puzzling contrasts of Persian character if we regard the later Achæmenidæ as simply showing what results imperial self-idolatry had produced even in the line which had borne a Cyrus and a Darius, and which might, but for the fate of war, have found in the younger Cyrus a restorer of its ancient glory. Nor is it fair to judge the people of Persia by the vices of a court possessed by a fury like Parysatis, or a beast like Ochus. They retained the energy to hold their immense empire till another world-conqueror appeared in Alexander; and they preserved their hold on the imaginative and ideal interest of the Greek republics, whose whole political history also was swayed by the wonderful resources of "the great king." A glance at their psychological qualities will perhaps indicate how an excess of nervous energy, unbalanced by contemplation or by associated industry,

1 Brisson, p. 187.

2 Brisson, p. 488, from Plutarch's *Alexander*. Brisson, p. 596, from Josephus and Xenophon.

3 Brisson, pp. 48, 49, from Stobæus' *Sermones*, xii.

4 Brisson, p. 49, from Varro, xii.

consumed itself in its own fires, till the central bases of authority gave way.

It has already been stated that the Persians, who ultimately mastered and absorbed all the tribes from Bactria to Semitic Assyria and Babylonia, may be taken as the typical Iranian race. Shown in their early monuments, as well as in their living representatives, the Tajiks and the Guebres, to have possessed an athletic and elegant physique and highly impressible senses, these Persians, — the Asiatic Greeks, — described as having oval faces, raised features, well-arched eyebrows, and large dark eyes, now soft as the gazelle's, now flashing with quick insight, were the antipodes of those stunted, square-faced, heavy and short-limbed Mongolian tribes, with which, under the name of Turan, they have waged incessant war. They were extremely receptive of moods, biasses, passions; the aptest learners, as they were the boldest adventurers of the East; not patient to study, not skilled to invent, but swift to seize, appropriate, and distribute; terrible breakers-up of old religious spells; Promethean conductors of monopolized fire out into world-wide use; mediators between the sealed thought of the East and the stirring life of the West; and, with all their absolutism, the heralds of liberty. They dissolved the stern old material civilizations of Cushite and Turanian origin, and made them flow to fertilize history, as they had already irrigated the Mesopotamian plains. What magnetic attractions; what passion for vast conquests; what quickness to learn the arts of sensuality and display! Persian magnificence lasts to the very end; from Achæmenidan to Seljuk Turk, from Darius to Alp-Arslân, the boundless ambition, the prodigality and pomp, the sweep of self-deification went on, with every successive dynasty that touched this soil, Parthian, Sassanide, Mongol, still thrilling with the old nerve-currents of this race; for Khosrû, for Timûr, the star of empire

forever beckoned. Herodotus makes Xerxes say to his nobles, "The Persians have never been quiet since the conquests of Cyrus; a deity is our guide, and ever assures us of triumph." "In olden times," says Æschylus, "a divine destiny compelled the Persians to demolish cities, and to brave with the frail tackling of their host-bearing ships the stormy ocean fields."

Here was a new fact in the Oriental world, — a race that believed alike in the actual and the ideal, holding firmly to both terms, following infinite longings like children, and mastering finite means like gods; no Hindu mysticism ignoring the seen; no Chinese matter-of-fact slipping away from the unseen. Every sculptured rock and every formula of prayer attests a religious earnestness not to be stiffened into ritual, or hardened into stone. So quick a sense of the ideal and so real an aspiration towards it could only be satisfied by constantly recognizing the higher personality of each individual as a real presence (*Fravashi*) hovering above his actual form, as protector and guide. The Highest God has his *Fravashi,* and commands Zoroaster to praise it.[1] Not less has every creature, for none can exist without its ideal, — the typical form to which it aspires, and through which it has life and strength.[2] These Fravashis were the better life of the universe, the blessedness of souls, invisible and serene; and with simple devoutness the Persian carved and painted them on his public works, and felt their mighty stress in the ardor of his practical will. Not less significant is his substitution of the ascending line in architecture for the horizontal style of Assyrian art.

This psychological sketch will be seen to illustrate sufficiently our position that the Persian mind was not the pure brain, not the passive muscle, but the flame-conductor between them, — in other words, nerve; and as India and

[1] Spiegel: *Vendidâd,* xix. 46. [2] *Yaçna*, xvii. 43; xxiii.; liv. 1.

China, in all they did, showed an overplus of these two mental elements respectively, so Persia had this third or mediative element in excess.

We must not fail to note that all the Iranian races were more or less of the same type. Those splendid empires of Babylonia, Assyria, Media, and Persia, each in turn gathering these races into a single impulse or a succession of impulses, to be dissolved as swiftly as the great battery could well be discharged, blazing with perpetual jets of conquest and revolt, we may well, I think, call flashes of nerve-power. Spasmodic, irresistible, the first rush of this living lightning that man had felt within him, they spent themselves on the passionate effort to turn the human world into the play of their magnificent dreams. But the genius of the Persians lifted this element to its ideal form. Well might they take the sun for their emblem, and call their kings by its name.[1] Well might the flashing globe be hoisted on the royal tent, and the golden eagle on the standards, when their glorious Mithra arose above the eastern mountains, giving the sign for the march of those vast armies resplendent with all the circumstance of courts and cities, sweeping the tribes into their torrent, and pouring them on in heat ungovernable till they broke in quivering fragments on the balanced solidity of Greek genius. "The impetuous lord of many-peopled Asia," sings Æschylus again, "urges his godlike armament against every land."[2]

But the ruin of the Persian was not the Greek phalanx only, or even chiefly.[3] Like the Hercules of the solar myth, seen on his gorgeous funeral pyre in the western sky, the Persian perished in his own fires. Cyrus indeed, the great, mild, generous conqueror, father of his people,

[1] Plutarch: *Life of Artaxerxes*. [2] *Persæ*.

[3] The Greeks really had little or no strategy; still less discipline. The accounts of tremendous losses by Persians in battle are probably exaggerations. See Mahaffy: *Rambles in Greece*, p. 194.

idol of Greek philosophy and romance, of Plato and Xenophon alike, in his short reign of thirty years (558–529 B. C.) made the little Persian satrapy or kingdom master of Asia from the Jaxartes to the Phœnician coasts; and, victor in all he undertook, he lay down at last, say most of his biographers, amid purple and gold, in his green paradise, under the truest and loftiest of all royal epitaphs, — "Here lies Cyrus, king of kings."[1] Only death satirized his ambition. But Cambyses, master of nations, must needs master Nature too, and so led his hosts against the sands of Egypt and Ethiopia, and the oasis of Ammon; and being discomfited, he came back an epileptic madman, to vent his rage on the priests of Apis and their sacred calf,[2] to violate temples and tombs, outrage his household, defy the traditions of his ancestral faith, bury his subjects alive, and die of fury on the news of a revolution, leaving no trace behind him in the Nile. And then Darius, the great organizer, and as humane as he was wise and thrifty, so beloved of Egypt for his friendliness to her people and her gods that they gave him alone the worship given their native kings, yet ventures not only to bridge the Bosphorus, but to cast a heterogeneous host of near a million men upon the Thracian wilderness to fight with famine and fire more than with human foes, escaping thence indeed through his wonderful personal resource, and effecting something beyond astonishing a zone of unexplored barbarians, since centuries elapsed before Persia suffered again from Scythian hordes. Then Xerxes, "yoking the ocean, equalling the gods,"[3] hurls a similar swarm upon Greece, set on by dreams and visions against

[1] So says the monument, which is apparently genuine. Herodotus has preserved the tradition that he died in a campaign against the barbarians of Scythia, and that his body was barbarously treated. i. 214.

[2] But see Brugsch Bey about these stories (*Egypt under the Pharaohs*, chap. xix.), especially that of Apis. Cambyses was as full of the idea of universal dominion as Cyrus. But Wiedemann affirms their truth (*Gesch. d. Aegypt.*, p. 230).

[3] Aeschylus: *Persæ*.

all good advice; and after praying to be permitted to subjugate Europe, and answering prayers of Greek refugees in the manner of a god, fares worse than the rest. The splendid bubble of European and African conquest which his father had put to his lips burst on their eager touch.

Persian failures were mainly due to the vast scale upon which enterprises were projected and prepared. Ten thousand could have penetrated the deserts better than a million. A small army of picked troops might have made front in Greece after Salamis, but the huge horde took fright at its own unwieldiness, and the "king of kings" was the victim of a panic; and though Mardonius had still a great host, the prestige was gone, and his army, like a swarm of locusts, became dead heaps on the land and in the sea. The unity and discipline of Xenophon's famous Ten Thousand made them more than a match for the unmanageable levies of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and their retreat succeeded simply because the Persians had no organization, and no plan for cutting it off. Then the subject States revolted everywhere, and the throne of the Achæmenides crumbled away.

This empire militant was the overflow of unregulated redundant force, hurled forth in gushes of heady drift, and as reckless of waste as a strong boy in the heat of play. It was a rare combination of magnificence with industry, of energy and impressibility. For this thirsty oxygen rushed into the world of sense, with keen relish for all its savors, and plucked ideal raptures from all. The earth was nard and roses, let it come in what pungency it would. This royalty must represent the universe. It appropriated the best of all things; called its builders out of Phœnicia and Egypt, and its physicians from Greece.[1] To the splendid court of the Achæmenidæ all beings and climes must be tributary, all tributes without stint; their harems

[1] Herodotus, iii. 130; vii. 25, 34. Diodorus, i. 46.

the rifling of continents, watched by unsexed guards, the last refinement of jealousy and the self-irony of lust; their tables spread for fifteen thousand daily, though the king himself dined alone, and often frugally; their water brought in silver from the Choaspes, their salt from the Libyan desert, their wine from Syria, and their wheat from Æolia; a thousand pounds of incense came yearly from Arabia; from Armenia tens of thousands of horses and hundreds of thousands of sheep; from Assyria five hundred eunuch-boys to serve at feasts; where, too, they had large towns, all whose revenues went for breeding dogs, and royal stables on an enormous scale; and the daily tribute to the satrap amounted to a bushel of silver.[1] Megacreon of Abdera in a sally of wit advised his fellow-citizens to go to the temples and thank the gods that Xerxes dined but once a day.

The provincial satraps repeated all this on a smaller scale, though with the king's spies beside them, official "eyes and ears," to report their wealth and what became of it. Then there were the nobles, clothed in purple, with painted eyebrows and false hair and stilted heels, covered with jewels and perfumes, protected by gloves and parasols against cold and heat; so that Herodotus found a reason for the special softness of their skulls.[2] The summer and winter palaces rose on the heights of Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis, story above story, of wondrously jointed, massive stones, light and graceful, open like the Greek temple to air and sky, on gigantic platforms set with forests of lofty fluted pillars, not like the Median, of cypress and cedar, but of marble, and soaring through them more than sixty feet, with capitals of bulls or griffins resting on the lotos leaf, the ideal forms of ancient art.[3] Dreamy and delicious

[1] Heeren: *Asiatic Nations*, i. 89, 159, 260, *et seq.* Herodotus, i. 188, 192. Duncker from Ctesias, ii. 610. Gibbon, xxiii., xxiv.

[2] Duncker, ii. 626, 627, from Herodotus. Herodotus, iii. 12.

[3] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, iii. 304.

with paradises, terraces, and hanging gardens on a colossal scale, Persia may well have wielded, even at that early day, the magical spells which were in after times to be woven about the world by her fountains, nightingales, roses, and wine.[1]

Yet it is obvious that results so prodigious were not achieved by an enervated race. This luxurious people obeyed the sturdy rules of Zoroaster. These world-absorbing kings, who had on their tables the first fruits of every land, were themselves under an ancient law not to eat or drink anything but native products.[2] They were irrigating the plains of Babylonia with all the old energy which had enabled their Semitic predecessors to draw three harvests a year from the fertile alluvion;[3] and a third of their revenue is said to have come from this satrapy alone.[4] "No spot on the globe, Egypt perhaps excepted, displays such masonry as the walls of Persepolis."[5] The Persians rejected the sun-dried brick of Babylonian architecture, and the thin slab-facings of Assyrian, and built platform and pile of solid stone. It was not a frivolous people that lifted those graceful pillar-stems which twenty-four centuries have not stirred. Great roads, beset with post-stations, and traversed by government couriers, "swifter, according to some," says Xenophon, "than the crane flies,"[6] carried safely a vast and busy intercourse, reaching from the steppes of Tartary to the shores of Greece. Over all these regions the genius of Darius organized under a single system, political and financial, the pregnant intermixture of races brought about by Assyrian wars and deportations. Nor did the innate preference of his people for agriculture prevent him from attempting to open canal communication between the Nile and

[1] See Ebers' novel, *An Egyptian Princess.*

[2] Athenæus, bk. xiv.

[3] Xenophon: *Œconomicus.*

[4] Herodotus, i. 192.

[5] Heeren, i. 151.

[6] Herodotus, viii. 98.

the Red Sea, only failing at last from some discovery as to the depth of level between the waters, or some other cause; and his travelling court and camp was itself the best market in the world. But for these constructive energies of the Persian kings, Alexander would have found no foothold for the lasting marriage of Europe with Asia, whose forerunners had crossed the floating bridge flung by Darius across the waters of the Bosphorus. The flourishing condition of Egypt when visited by Herodotus is ample witness to the excellence of Persian rule,[1] though the barbarous rage of Ochus against her gods, after the reconquest of Egypt, rivalled the worst excesses of Cambyses in his madness.

The Persian instructed his children to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth.[2] He rose with the sun, was used to bread-and-water diet at home and acorns and wild fruits on the hunt. When he was seen on foot, he was at work; when not at work, the noble steed was his idol and companion. He really scorned those who scorned toil. When the younger Cyrus led Lysander through his pleasure-grounds at Sardis, and told him he had planned and planted them with his own hands, the aristocratic Spartan looked incredulously on his golden chains and gorgeous robes. "I swear to you as a servant of Mithra," exclaimed the Prince, "that I never taste food till on my brows is the sweat of toil."[3] Strabo says, from Onomacritus, that the tomb of Darius bore the inscription: "Among the hunters I took the palm; what I would do, that I could."[4] Artaxerxes wore upon his person the worth of twelve thousand talents, yet shared the hardships of his army on the march, carrying quiver and shield, leading the way up the steepest places, and lightening the hearts of his soldiers by footing it twenty-five miles a day. The common people had a

[1] Wiedemann: *Gesch. d. Aegypt.*, pp. 242, 259.
[2] Herodotus, i. 136.
[3] Xenophon: *Œconomicus*, p. 6.
[4] Strabo, bk. xv.

religious respect for cultivating the earth and for preserving its signs of productive power.[1] They were loath to cut down ancient trees merely for fuel; but Artaxerxes solved their scruples by himself laying the axe to the finest one in his paradise, and letting the whole go freely to make night fires for his shivering men.[2] Their worship of Ormuzd made them watch and work with religious zeal, and obey the laws of purity and health as the first of duties. Their hatred of Ahriman made them wage lifelong warfare against the barrenness and the noxious creatures that constituted his realm. Excess of loyalty to the idea of personal sway, not baseness, explains their amazing endurance under the cruelties of royal caprice. Adorers of the Flame, they shared the spirit of their maddest kings, and were as ready to throw away their lives on an impossibility as the kings were to command it. In war they were, beyond all the races they led forth, the terror even of the Greeks. Heraclides of Pontus based on their example his theory that luxury exalted men above littleness and fear.[3]

What has been said of the old Iranian races is illustrated in their sculpture. Of the wonderful vitality and vigor of the Assyrian hunting and battle scenes, I have already spoken. They are as realistic and practical as the Egyptian paintings of a similar kind, but have a poetic ardor of which that meditative race had no conception. The details of real life are wrought in a glow of spontaneity, by flashes of nerve-energy. The aim is not so much to render the exact image of the action as to convey the

[1] The agriculturalist was in honor; he is mentioned in the *Avesta* as the third class, after priest and soldier, and before tradesmen. *Yaçna*, xix. 18. In the Hindu system there is a trading but no farming caste, unless the Sudra, or lowest, may be so considered. Moreover, the order of the Persian classes, which are not castes, is not material, and implies no subordination.

[2] Plutarch's Lives (Langhorne), viii. 184.

[3] Athenæus, xii. Also Julian's tribute, in his *Cæsars*, to the valor and politeness of the Persians (Gibbon).

significance of it in art. There is no literalism about it; and it even contains hints of unconscious symbolism.

In some respects, Persian sculpture falls behind Assyrian. There is equal stiffness of outlines and failure of perspective, with certainly less elaboration of detail. But the ideal aspiration overflows all defects, and shows itself, both by choice of subjects and mode of treatment, to be the supreme gift of the Persian. Instead of common and domestic life, here are heroic combats of men with beasts, triumphant marches or processions bearing tributes, kings at worship or upon thrones; and always the literal fact melts into the symbol, the human meaning beyond and above it. The fighting bulls and lions are not brutes, but massive human strength and energy of will. You do not see this or that king fulfilling his functions; you see royalty, war, worship, in their significance for sense and soul.[1] There stands — Darius, it may be, the "king of kings," with plain fillet on his brow, short dress and naked arms, and a poise of limb that seems to make living force an attribute of repose; with one hand he grasps the horn of a semi-human monster, with the other drives the dagger home. There again, with equal majesty, he masters the man-like lion or the wild ass. There his human god is hovering above him in winged circle, and his right foot rests upon a prostrate man. Nine kings stand before him, low of stature, with bare heads and bound hands; and this the inscription: "When the lands rebelled against me, I fought nineteen battles and took captive nine kings: it was through the grace of Ormuzd that I did it. Thou who shalt be king hereafter, beware of sin, and punish it. So shall thy realm be invincible."[2]

We shall better understand what force there is in this term *nerve*, as applied to the Iranian races (Lydians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians), when we have fully

[1] Kugler: *Gesch. d. Baukunst*, i. 73–75, 94.

[2] *Records of the Past*, i. 126, 127.

considered the fact that, whether Semite or Aryan, they were all worshippers of the Flame. What indeed but Fire could symbolize that ambition which no enterprise was vast enough to match, that sensuous susceptibility that turned everything into food for passionate desire. Yet the nobler elements of the moral ideal, — magnanimity, ardor, devotion to the best, — are also equally natural fruits of that "purity in thought, word, and deed," which Zoroaster taught his followers was the meaning of the creative Fire. A devouring flame is like the lusty youth of human aspiration, as these races made manifest: undisciplined, capable of ideal good and ideal evil, their darkness and their light were two warring powers for the conquest of the world. The lassitude and exhaustion of their mighty efforts, the despotic license and caprice that constructed world-empires, the swift disintegration of ill-organized power; the gigantic sweep of vision and desire, the impulse to universality, the sense of movement never to pause nor turn back, — what word shall express the meaning and function of all this in the development of man?

Frequent as its analogue may be in the life of individuals, the phenomenon will never again be seen in the history of nations. Psychologically, as well as geographically, Iran was the transition from Oriental to Western civilization. Never again can the psychical brain, muscle, nerve of the human races be so separated that in each civilization one element shall be in overwhelming excess of the others, as these studies have shown them to have been in the Hindu, the Chinese, and the Persian civilizations previous to the maturer fusion of these forces in the development of Europe, which has in fact been in this respect the flowering of the mediative Iranian type of mind. The intercourse of races, the fusion of temperaments and beliefs, the scientific knowledge and rise of universal laws, has insured a more balanced activity of the human facul-

ites in every civilized people than was possible under the older isolating conditions. Yet we have also seen that the vital germs of all that we now hold to be best were vigorous enough to prove, even in these fragmentary ethnic types, that the moral and spiritual nature needed no supernatural grafting nor change of law. What was needed is equally plain. In place of the pure thought of the Hindu and the plodding work of the Chinese, we have now a third type, which conducts the cerebral into muscular energy, and makes both effective. The Iranian mind was thus the first mediator on an ethnic scale between thought and work, ideal and real, mind and its material, and therefore the harbinger of progress. We may say that the function of Persia, as its leading representative, was to be herald of the claims of the infinite to mould the finite, of the ideal to become real; but herald only because its special quality always was in excess. What India and China represented is not therefore superseded. Without due balance from brain and muscle, the nerve-fire must consume itself. And so we who inherit in special the gift of Iran are working out those of India and China too, but under freest conditions; which must create a fourth type of mind, including more than brain, muscle, and nerve, because it is these in the proper unity of their relations.

To arrive at the full meaning of our relation to the Iranians, we must translate the physiological symbol into philosophical terms, which represent the self-affirmation of the ideal in its cruder stage; namely, as has been said, the exaltation, or worship, of personal Will. Deficient in the cerebral and muscular types of mind, this factor conjoins the two in the form of a concentrated energy of aim. Will, the true force of personality, is thus the supreme ideal of those races whose life is not in thought as thought, nor in work as work, but in the act of converting the one into the other; that is, in action itself as action. The his-

tory of this ideal is written in the faiths and cultures whose cradle is Western Asia, and whose maturity constitutes modern civilization. We live amid its closing epochs, full of the foregleams of a higher and better worship than that of personal Will; and the study of its opening phases, in the Iranian empires, so typical of what has succeeded them, will greatly help us to understand where we are.

The self-deification of Iranian monarchs was simply a political expression of the faith of their peoples in the ideal of personal Will. However rapidly leaving behind them the extremes of what is called "personal government," Europe and America still embody this ideal in their anthropomorphic religious beliefs. They deify not only the higher forms of human virtue, but also human qualities fully in keeping with Oriental autocracy in its worst forms. Assyrian or Persian royal barbarities pale before the systematic cruelty ascribed to the God of Christian creeds, and defended in his name. The worship of the Achæmenidan king was thus in its evil as well as its good the natural germ of the worship of a Christ. A personal Divine Will is at the root of both forms of incarnation, however different in many moral and spiritual respects may be the Zoroastrian and the Christian God. These specially religious bearings of the subject will hereafter come under consideration. At present we must show how thoroughly the ancient Persians represented the nerve-type, the authority of personal Will.

The testimony of Greek and native writers makes it highly probable that the old Persians inherited the social organization which recent researches have shown to lie at the base of Indo-European as well as Sclavonic and Mongolian society, — that of the Village Community, where the family household was the social unit, expanded by adoption and other fictions into clans bound together by traditional usages and more or less hereditary functions. But

however this may have been, we find them advanced to a higher stage of individualism for which the mere village community afforded no place. While many of the tribes were free nomads, the most appear to have been agricultural; and society had developed into a congeries of clans, which the Avesta describes as under the "chieftainship of heads of families, of villages, of tribes, and of provinces, with Zoroaster for the fifth,"[1] and as divided into four classes, "priests, soldiers, farmers, and artisans," among whom there seems to have been no distinction, at least as to choice of spiritual guides, which was "the duty of every righteous man."[2]

These chiefs (*Pehlevânân*) had become nobles in a kind of feudal constitution, wherein the king was limited by the free traditions of certain heroic families, or individuals, who were often closely related to the royal house, and had scarcely inferior following; led the armies of the kingdom, could act the offended Achilles, if they pleased, with great effect, and were, if they chose to be so, the real pillars of the throne. They are the heroes of the Persian epic,[3] and their allegiance appears to have been a traditional loyalty rather than any sense of inferiority.[4] They regard the king, as the Homeric heroes regard Agamemnon, with conditional and provisional respect, simply as meeting their necessity for gathering around a central Will. This, it will be perceived, is obviously such an outgrowth of the tribal patriarchalism which lies at the basis of all ancient society, as would naturally become a people in whom the worship of will was a growing instinct. In nothing does this instinct more strongly appear than in their intense feeling of the dignity of their own persons, and of their divine function or commission as a people to

[1] *Yaçna*, xix. 17, 18.

[2] See also Spiegel: *Erân Alterth.*, bk. v. chap. i.; Herodotus, i. 125. 101; Spiegel, i. 555; Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 188.

[3] Manoshcihr, Sâm, Zâl, Rustem.

[4] Spiegel: *Erân Alterth.*, i. 555, 556.

incarnate a kind of personal sovereignty. They were thoroughly aristocratic, therefore; the worship of will is essentially so, because it rests on an inherent right of command, and would not be will if it had not subject powers. For the Persian noble, his own dignity was a religious charge. His education, so full of generous discipline and incentives to public service, cut him off from the masses, who, as Herodotus distinctly tells us, had not the means nor leisure for such culture, free and open as it was. For his king he must be ready to die, yet his own self-respect makes him the king's counsellor; and neither Cyrus nor Darius does aught of moment without consulting his peers.[1] The Greeks with one accord put into their mouths, often doubtless with truth, at least to custom, wise maxims and brave advice. A conspiracy of seven nobles overturns the usurper who pretended to the name of *Smerdis*, as Cyrus and his leagued nobles had revolted against the Mede. By their united councils, according to Herodotus, every form of government was canvassed, the monarchical deliberately selected, and Darius chosen as king by an appeal to signs from heaven. They were called *Khshaêta* (*Shâh*), the same as the king; dressed as he did, coined money,[2] held courts. He was only *pâdishâh*, chief of the chiefs; or *Shâhân-Shâh*, king of the kings of Iran, — and under them were chiefs of lower order.[3]

Observe the dignity to which these high-born Persian wills were trained. Their education was not in reading and writing, which are democratic, but in manners, — how

[1] Gobineau's fascinating picture of the free life of the Iranian feudatories, whom Cyrus changed to subjects, contains perhaps a good measure of truth. But its main sources are not the Greek writers, but later traditions, Persian and Mussulman; and the *Avesta* throws but little light on the subject.

[2] "The right of coining money was a right inherent in every community in the Persian empire, great or small. Local sovereigns and satraps exercised it during the whole period of that empire." (Waddington, quoted in *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxi. 442.) The Arsacide coins, investigated by Levy in this article, and shown to be the earliest Pehlevî literature, prove this.

[3] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, i. 467.

to bear themselves towards each other. They were so clothed that no naked part of the body appeared, to offend another's eye; they kept silence at meals; they guarded their emotions, allowed themselves no outbreak of surprise or delight; did not spit or blow the nose before others; at meeting they kissed, but spoke not, — a Spartan self-restraint; a Spanish hauteur and distance.

But better than this was their theory, at least, of moral self-respect. To lie was cowardice; the secret falsehood that made one ashamed to look in his neighbor's eye was the unpardonable sin. After lying, the greatest of sins was to owe another, and so make oneself his slave.[1] The unspoken hint of honor in the pressure of the hand was the most binding of pledges. Artaxerxes, according to Ctesias, was persuaded by Megabyzus to hold to his promise of pardon to a rebel, who was discovered after capture to have murdered the king's brother.[2] Laws against ingratitude had their basis in the idea of falsehood implied by that vice. This respect for truth and this horror of lying as contamination are here very largely incidents of pride, and associate the beginnings of personal worship with the sense of honor and the law of duty. The cultivation of them had become in the Persian nobles a tradition of their personal dignity. In the history of personality as an ideal principle their prevalence in the early civilizations is of great significance, and will be more fully considered hereafter. Though found at the threshold of all those ethnic faiths and forms which conspired to the production of our own, they are perhaps nowhere so emphasized as in Persian ethics. Thucydides says of this people, that with them it was held better to give than to receive. Their schools, according to Xenophon, were placed aloof from the noises of trade, that the eager passions of those who were haggling with each other might not disturb their culture of

[1] Plutarch: *Artaxerxes*. [2] Ctesias, 34–37.

justice and self-control.[1] He doubtless reports a traditional ideal at least, when he says that in his day the young nobles were brought up at the court, that they might not see anything immodest.[2] Cyrus spurns the Greek cities on the score of their great markets;[3] and Strabo even says of educated Persians, that they will have nothing to do with buying and selling.[4] This would be contrary to Zoroastrian precept if it meant indolence, and served to distinguish them from the masses, who most certainly did labor, and pay respect to whatever trading it involved. The Persian cities did not show any lack either of toil or traffic. It was natural enough for the national ideal of personal dignity to have its extreme representatives in a class who made pursuit of this ideal their exclusive business, and a function guarded from all suspicion or suggestion of self-seeking. "The Persians," says a careful student of their manners, "strove for the ideal, — the great, noble, manly, true; yet forgot not the practical world."[5] This is in accordance with the views already stated; contempt for traffic is one thing, and contempt for toil is another. The Persian noble was a laborer, as his faith enjoined; but in his day the connection of labor with the art of "doing business" was not so palpable as it now is, while its religious meaning lay in its direct association with the earth, in the toils of production, not of distribution. The Persians were made for soldiers; their ideal was of the heroic type, and the arts they found congenial were those which fitted them to master the world and prepare the way for vital civilizations. Such arts could culminate only in the culture of such personal qualities as self-reliance, self-assertion, and absolutism of will. In their noblest form, these qualities became a lofty magnanimity, which knew how "to spare

[1] *Cyropædia*, i. 2.
[2] *Anabasis*, i. 9.
[3] Herodotus, i. 153.
[4] Strabo: *De Situ Orb.* xv.
[5] Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xx. 128).

fallen enemies," to reject the death penalty for a single offence, and to forbid even kings to treat their slaves with harshness.[1]

This self-respect, in so many ways characteristic of the Persians, was to a great degree a form of pride. Here, for the first time in human history, we find the sense of a really historic function. The confluence and conflict of Asiatic races had necessitated the appearance of a select tribe capable of commanding these vast materials, whose ferment was now heading towards a definite world-result. The force must be in personal Will, not in mass nor even in organization,—in will, conscious of right to rule, and intensified both by self-indulgence and self-respect. In the Persian genius for sway begins that worship of personality which has been the shaping force for good and ill of European civilization.

Its absolutism may be illustrated by the treatment of woman. In Persia, far more than in India or China, she is subject to the will of man. Here the harem reaches its full development, and the eunuchs, or keepers of women, are installed around it. Here seclusion was but little modified by custom or by circumstance. In the inscriptions and sculptures woman is wholly ignored. One would not know there was any sex but the male. What a record of slavery is in that deportation by Darius of fifty thousand women to populate Babylon, drawn like tributes of food or cattle from the several provinces of the empire![2] or in the custom of taking concubines with the army on distant marches, in great numbers, and with luxurious attendance, and leaving wives at home under close supervision![3] or in that story of the concubine, dressed in splendid robes, who came to the Greek victors after Platæa,

[1] Herodotus, i. 137, 138; ix. 109. Gobineau, i. 403.
[2] Herodotus, iii. 159.
[3] See authorities in Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, iii. 238. Brisson, p. 549.

and besought them to deliver her from the Persian lord who had carried her off by violence and held her as a slave![1] The Persian could marry his nearest kindred,[2] and the law imposed on him no such strict commandment of chastity as the law of Manu enforced on the Hindu; still less did it resemble the sexual asceticism of the Buddhist. The will of the Persian was his law; and the story of the seven nobles sent to the king of Macedonia to demand earth and water, and who were all assassinated on account of their indecent behavior at a banquet towards the wives of their hosts, sounds all the more probable for being related by Herodotus of the Persians.[3] The demand of these ruffians that the Macedonian women, contrary to the custom of the land, should be brought out to sit with them at table, shows that in their own country even the rule of seclusion yielded to arbitrary will. The Biblical romance of Esther, to the same effect, tells us of the queen of Ahasuerus, that the king commanded her to appear before the crowd at a feast, and that she refused to obey. Artaxerxes was glad to have his queen Statira ride in an open chariot, that the country women might salute her; at the same time no male must approach or pass her, upon penalty of death.[4]

But, on the other hand, woman must have found her account in the national respect for personality itself. A son could not sit in his mother's presence without permission; and if a king, he occupied at table a place lower than hers. A law dating from Cyrus decreed that when the king entered a city, every woman in it should receive a piece of gold; and this was done in honor of the women who by their reproaches turned back his fleeing army in the Median war.[5] Cyrus, always the national ideal, had but one wife, and at her death commanded that the whole

[1] Herodotus, ix. 76. [2] Duncker, ii. 419. [3] Herodotus, v. 18–20.
[4] Plutarch: *Artaxerxes.* [5] Plutarch on the virtues of women.

nation should go into mourning.[1] His chivalrous treatment of women is a leading feature of Xenophon's portrait, and far surpasses anything of the kind in Greek manners. The education of the Persians in childhood belonged to the mother; and the crimes of Parysatis and Amestris prove that their customs permitted the queen, as wife and as mother, an almost absolute power in public and private affairs. In the later times of the empire women were made priestesses of Anaitis, or of the sun, and dedicated to chastity. The honor paid by Cyrus to women, their names given in the army-lists of Xerxes, and the constant reference to them as important political and social forces throughout the histories of the Achæmenide kings, are evidences of no slight recognition of female capacities and rights.[2]

In political as in domestic life, the ultimate appeal was to arbitrary Will. The law of the Medes and Persians,[3] that could not be changed, was nothing else than the rigor of the king's decree for the time being. Personal government, as developed in modern times, except in its theological form, is either limited by recognized laws and customs, as even the autocracy of the Czar; or checked by international relations, as that of the Sultan; or obliged to make appeal in some real or pretended way to the popular voice, as that of the French emperor. In China it is controlled by an immemorial ritual; in India, by an equally immemorial religious tradition. But the later Persian autocrat had the personal government of an omnipotent Will. There was no precept of the Persian national religion which he did not violate whenever he pleased; no foreign custom he did not adopt or reject as he preferred. It is entirely impossible to reconcile the Zoroastrian law with the history of any Achæmenide king. Cyrus punishes the

[1] Herodotus, ii. 1.

[2] Herodotus, vii. 61; Ctesias, *passim*. Plutarch: *Artaxerxes*. Justin, x. 2.

[3] Daniel, vi 15.

(sacred) water of the Gyndes for drowning his horse, and Cambyses violates tombs and burns bodies. Cyrus is deterred from burning Crœsus not by religious scruples, but by sympathy and respect. Xerxes treats the Hellespont with contempt. There is no record of the Avesta ritual being performed by these kings, and their Magi were quite other than the Avestan Âthrava. They gave the Greeks the impression which a sublime self-idolatry is wont to make on nations, of a divine right to rule; so that even Xenophon wrote his "Institutions of Cyrus" in order to show how the difficult problem of personal government and popular consent might be solved, and the world be ruled by one person whose character should cause all men to desire to be governed by his opinions and will.

Our Greek authorities make the rise (Cyrus), organization (Darius), and extension (Xerxes) of the empire pure products of individual Will. Only the royal personality holds together these loose principalities and tribes, its "eyes and ears" being omnipresent; and the satraps, Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus, by merely aping its desires and doings in their own spheres, are able to direct the fortunes of the free Greek States. It is the king's wisdom that conquers nations, as with Cyrus; the king's folly that loses battles, as with Darius at Issus; his iconoclastic rage that tramples old religions under foot, as with Cambyses in Egypt;[1] his person whom the enemy in battle makes the objective point, as when Cyrus the Younger made directly for Artaxerxes, and Alexander for the tent of Darius. Only one sin is known to the cuneiform records of nations subdued and punished, — "They rebelled against me, the king of kings, and deserved their fate at my hands." No sense of presumption in all this, no suspicion of wrongdoing, more than in the Hebrew Jahveh when he lifts up and

[1] But see Brugsch Bey's *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, chap. xix., where the stories of Cambyses' rage against Apis, etc., are denied, from the monuments.

casts down at his will. "I was not wicked," writes Darius, proudly, "nor a tyrant, nor a liar; neither I, nor any of my race. I have obeyed the laws; and the rights and customs I have not violated."[1]

We must not suppose that any Persian regarded this supremacy as an arbitrary Will imposed from without. The Hebrews were not the only "chosen nation." Every Persian shared the "manifest destiny" of his king. The king was the ideal. The fire was extinguished at his death. This was a nation of kings, of gods. They alone, of all subjects, paid no tribute to the throne. They were not ground into powder, like Assyrian or Babylonian multitudes at toil. Their chiefs associated with the king, reasoned and joked with him, gave him counsel, heard his schemes with approval or doubt.[2] But the rights of his will they did not doubt. Even in Herodotus' story that Cyrus persuaded them to join him in rebellion against the Medes by setting them at hard work one day and feasting them the next, to show them the difference between subjection and freedom, the prince acts as one who knows that he has authority to enforce their consent. Herodotus himself seems to have no other conception of him than as one divinely made for ruling men.[3] The boys at school elect him king. Astyages sees by his manners that he is a king in the disguise of a herdsman's child. He revolts against Media with no other visible authority to seize the empire than a spurious letter appointing him general of the Persian levies. His studious regard for feudal rights and personal feelings is made by Xenophon to appear, as we have already said, as a conscious policy of conceding liberties and lavishing favors that men might feel free in an obedience that flowed naturally from gratitude and love. And in after

[1] Behistun, iv. 13.

[2] The old heroic legends of the native Iranian chronicles, preserved in Firdûsî and Hamza, make the relation of the king to his chiefs the same as we find it in Herodotus.

[3] Herodotus, v. 121.

days, when the taste of power had become sweet to the pampered lords of Persia, the "king of kings" takes care to protect his supremacy by putting the provinces under governors of native birth.[1] Alexander pursued the same policy, and thereby offended Greek and Macedonian pride of race and desire of exclusive power.

Historically, then, the beginning of respect for personality is in aristocratic institutions; not in honor to an ideal self, in which all may prospectively share, but in a kind of worship for powers of will, great enough to distinguish some persons above all others. In India, the ideal is in a religious law, embodied in a hereditary priesthood. In China, it is a labor-power embodied in a homogeneous multitude. In Persia, it has become a strictly personal Will embodied in an individual, a class, a tribe, who are capable of showing its power. The early Persians chose their bravest for king, and they never forgot the connection between authority and personal energy. Darius was himself, like Cyrus, the choice of a body of revolting chiefs. Although absolute over his satraps, he was satirized by his nobles. "Cyrus ruled as a father, Cambyses as a master, Darius as a trader."[2] Yet the administrative force of this politic ruler was what made Persia an empire; and while his nobles were free to criticise, they failed not to recognize the mighty constructive will that was felt alike at the centre and circumference of his dominions, restraining, balancing, harmonizing powers, and reconciling the intellectual, social, and even religious differences of the tribes. The mildest of conquerors, the mediator of nations, explorer of the continents, opener of the ways from sea to sea,[3] Darius stands, perhaps, the strongest justification in history for the worship of personal Will.[4] The weakness

[1] Gobineau, ii. 43. [2] Herodotus, iii. 89. [3] Ibid., iii. 135.

[4] It is the report of Diodorus that Darius was the only king who had been deified by the Egyptians in his lifetime, and that they rendered him after his death the same honors which they were wont to pay to their ancient kings. Diodorus, i. 95.

of his successors could not stand the ideal test that Persian freedom still knew how to apply; and real power passed gradually from their hands into those of overbearing court favorites and satraps of energy and skill, and even of Greek generals and refugees.

There is thus a very positive sense in which we can speak of Persian freedom. Not a democratic sense of the word, but one that meant rights and powers, and even anticipated very important elements in Greek liberty, — which was always more or less an appeal by the masses to personal government by the strongest will, and on the part of the more thoughtful minds, such as the Socratic school, a protest against crude democracy as usurping the political rights of the best and highest wills. Not more pronounced was the Greek consciousness of manifest national destiny than that Persian sense of a great historic function which every Persian noble shared with his king. It ran in their blood, as in his, to make the world their footstool. The proudest autocrat could not disregard this community of faith and feeling, nor fail to consult it. Xerxes, on the whole, despite a few terrible acts of power, the most forgiving of kings, persuading his lords to make war on Greece, says: "I only pursue the path appointed me. From the beginning we Persians have never been at rest: a deity impels us. I need not recount the conquests of my predecessors. Sufficient to say, I am resolved to invade Greece and punish Athens. But that I may not seem to act arbitrarily, I commit the matter to your reflection, allowing every one to speak with freedom."[1] Influenced by certain chiefs to give up the plan, he is again brought to his first resolution by supernatural visions, which call him to fulfil his destiny, and march to universal sway.[2]

We have here the explanation of the remarkable fact that the "Great King" was in many ways an ideal, politi-

[1] Herodotus, vii. 8. [2] Ibid., vii. 19.

cal and ethical as well as religious, to the Greek republics. The germs of liberty in Persian life were quite sufficient to overcome their reluctance to accept what would seem to be directly contrary to the individualism of these warring democracies. Not only were the literary representatives of a citizenship that refused to prostrate itself before a throne so fascinated by the "Great Barbarian" that his institutions are the material of their Utopias, but the party and personal strifes of Greek States are constantly referred to him for settlement, and their exiles compete for his favorable interference. This was not so much a tribute to his wisdom or humanity (although the ethical contrast of king and politician is usually by no means to the credit of the latter) as it was a recognition of the necessity on the part of a swarm of bitter partisans to take refuge from political chaos in the grandeur of one omnipotent Will. The Greek republics were nowhere based on a universal principle; the liberty they pursued was the liberty to will and to do; and here was its ideal embodied, not in the personal centre of the State alone, but in the prestige and pride of the chiefs of families and clans. The majestic proportions of this development of personal power; its day of judgment for the weak empires of the East; its splendid illustration of capacity in Cyrus and Darius, and of magnificence in Xerxes; the colossal growth that pointed back to sturdy simplicity and self-control, and the consciousness of immense educational obligations in art and science, — combined to produce an effect on Greek imagination it would not be going too far to call religious. Xenophon, who had led his Ten Thousand on the most perilous march in all antiquity, and who had fully learned the superiority of the Greeks as soldiers to Persian levies and leaders, was not a man to be dazzled or awed by a mere Eastern despot, least of all by an Artaxerxes in the last stages of Persian decline. Yet it is Xenophon who has paid the highest

possible tribute to Persian institutions. And Plato himself is scarcely behind him in the praises of these institutions, and especially of the training of the kings, which he puts into the mouth of Socrates, who contrasts them with the moral and religious crudeness of Greek disciplines.[1] No deity could compare with Destiny for Hellenic reverence. And the infection of the Persian's confidence in his star greatly helped to bring about the extraordinary fact, that Cyrus the barbarian became the politico-religious ideal of the cultivated Greek.

This religious prestige, which gathered about Cyrus from the first moment of his appearance on the historic field, so rapidly covered his name with mythic honors, that but few definite facts can be discerned through their haze. The coming of a great man seems to dwarf history and open the gates of imagination for the common mind. Nature melts at his coming into poetry and legend, and the world inherits a new meaning from the soul of man with which it is slow to part. As late as the second century of Christianity, Pausanias interrupts his praise of Antoninus to say that in his opinion Cyrus was after all the "father of mankind."

Greek testimony leaves us in doubt whether Cyrus was Persian or Mede; while a third theory made him both, giving rise to the story that an oracle had warned Astyages against the coming of a mule to the throne.[2] This notion of a mixed origin impressed itself on the Persian heroic legend, as appears in the later Shâh-Nâmeh, where he is the son of an Iranian father and a Turanian mother; and the Mahometan prose historians follow the tradition.[3] His name has stood for the communion of races and religions, the pride of each making him its conquest and its crown. Both the Hebrew and the Mussulman

[1] First Alcibiades, 36, 37. [2] *Description of Greece*, viii. 43.
[3] Mirkhond.

tradition claim him as their convert. A Mahometan poem of the twelfth century, working up earlier beliefs, derives him from a female demon (*dîv*), gives him a hideous countenance and immense strength, in other words, makes him a barbarian; rescues him from exposure in the forests, and educates him in Iran, where he recurs to barbarian faith and habits, but recovers himself, conquers Turan, becomes the saviour of his people and the master of the world.[1] Then falling from grace, and exalting himself as God, he is punished by rebellion, and converted to the true faith and ethics by meeting a hermit in the forest, who humbles his pride and teaches him the wisdom and might of Allah. This, as the reader will observe, follows the usual dealing of Semitic religions with the names of great heathens whom they could not but respect. But it is also the ordinary type of the old Iranian legend, as in Yima. In the same way the older Shâh-Nâmeh transports him and his paladins to practise devotions among the holy mountains of Elburz, making the old Iranian feudalism end in mystical piety. And Mirkhond, who collected the Islamized traditions of old Persian kings (fifteenth century), describes Kai-Khosrû, by that time probably identified with Cyrus, as the benefactor of laborers and the saviour of his country, and makes him at last a Sufi, who prays for release from self and absorption into God, — "convinced," after a hundred years of success in all his desires, that "this world is but a mirage, and we the thirsty travellers"! [2]

The infancy and growth of Cyrus, as treated by the mythologists, are of messianic type. The similarity of the mythic forms by which national religions express the sense of gratitude to an appointed deliverer, and of the bitter resistance he meets from the evil he comes to overthrow, is fully illustrated in the cycle of legends of Herodotus,

[1] *Kuschnameh*, or History of Cyrus. See Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses.*
[2] Shea: *Kings of Persia*, p. 260.

in the dream of Mandane prefiguring her son's glory, the dream of Astyages that his throne was in peril from his own grandson; in his consulting the Magi, and commanding the death of the child; in the escape of Cyrus through the power of Destiny; in the king's merciless revenge on his counsellors and agents, and his discovery of the boy's identity by the innate royalty of his behavior among his playfellows and before the great men. These legends, and those of his maturer life, of which Xenophon's romance is also a variation, must have been very largely of Persian rather than Greek origin. Their extension shows how widely spread was the recognition of a vast and beneficent change wrought by Cyrus in the west of Asia. They are of great value as indicating the far higher civilization introduced by the Persians in place of the Median. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between their picture of Median despotism and barbarism, and that which Xenophon has ventured to draw of the splendid humanity and statesmanly policy of Cyrus. It points strongly to a difference of race, and gives color to Oppert's recent theory in explanation of the different lists of kings in Herodotus and Ctesias, — that Median civilization was Turanian.

The same ideal prestige ascribed to Cyrus that choice wisdom of apologue, parable, and proverb which Hebrew admiration ascribed to Solomon, and Christian to Jesus. His symbolical appeal to the Persian nobles already mentioned; animal legends, such as the letter sent to them sewed up in a hare's belly, and the suckling of Cyrus by a dog (an etymological myth); his parable of the piper and the foolish fishes,[1] told to the chiefs who had only submitted to him when compelled; and the maxims of political and moral wisdom which are ascribed to him by the Greeks, — that those who would not do good for

[1] Herodotus, i. 141.

themselves should be obliged to do good for others, that no one ought to govern who was not better than those he governed, and that the Persians should not change their rocky and rude country, because the seeds of plants and the lives of men resemble the soil they inhabit;[1] above all, his relation with Crœsus, of which we are about to speak more fully, — all show the drift of gnomic and oracular repute to this favorite of the gods.

As the hero of philosophical romance, Cyrus receives in Xenophon's "Cyropædia" the finest personal tribute of the kind now mentioned in all antiquity. Here he acts the part of an ethical and political saviour, coming into the world with authority and insight to rectify all wrong. He is the incarnation of "sweetness and light." He shows this absolute function in rebuking Median luxury and intemperance, even as a boy; in conveying reproof and instruction to his chiefs by elaborate logic, practical illustrations, aphorisms, and even cheerful raillery and ready wit, and to soldiers, courtiers, sages, not only in a constant didactic tone, like the Socrates of Plato or the Jesus of the Gospels, but in a minute pedagogy, as if authorized to create anew in every detail the administration of society and law. He is more than teacher; he is the centre of teachers, who lay at his feet all the experience of man, that in him it may be lifted to universal ends. All that the Socratic Xenophon has imbibed from the best society of the ancient world is not too much to be worked up into the mere outfit for this inspired guide of mankind, not in the theory and practice of the virtues only, but in the most difficult functions of political and military life. At the feet of his father, Cambyses, he listens respectfully to maxims of faith and conduct which have never been surpassed, — that the gods act according to laws; that we should pray only after striving to render ourselves such as

[1] Plutarch: *Apophthegms of Kings.*

we ought and hope to be, holding it impious to ask the gods for gifts we do not struggle to earn; that there is no way of *appearing* wise so certain as to *be* wise; that the commander's care of his army should be of a nobler sort than merely to keep physicians to cure their diseases, even the wisdom to prevent their falling sick; that by perfect sympathy he should win their confidence and love, — to which ends hosts of practical maxims are supplied.[1] How humbly he accepts the paternal admonition never to use the Persians for his own interest alone! How respectfully he listens to the Lydian king, till the day of his falling into his own power the wisest and greatest of earthly kings,[2] ever consulting his prudence and tact, and moved to tenderness by his sufferings; learning from his downfall the instability of success; requiting his noble confession of insufficiency to contend against the greater one whom Destiny had provided by the generous restoration of his family and goods![3] How he caps these lessons of human pride and failure with the royal philosophy, that happiest is the man who can earn most through justice, and use most with honor![4] By what choice disciples he is surrounded! Tigranes thrills his soul by describing the sage (a reminiscence of Socrates) who forgives his king for condemning him to death "since he knows not what he does."[5] Chrysantas delights to discern in him the proofs that a good prince can be a good father of his people, and only adds to his master's ethics of rational obedience that reason which his own modesty had not emphasized, — the right of one to claim it whose fitness to lead men to their own best good was past all doubt.[6] Gobryas praises his simple and hardy habits; and having committed a beautiful daughter to his care, is rewarded by his assurance that to enjoy such confidence is a more precious treasure in his sight than all the wealth

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, i. 6.
[2] Ibid., viii. 2.
[3] Ibid., vii. 2.
[4] Ibid., viii. 2.
[5] Ib.d., iii 1.
[6] Ibid., viii. 1.

of Babylon.[1] Pheraulas, whose courage to withstand the temptations of riches, and to exchange their burdens for independence with poverty, finds an appreciative king.[2] And both father and mother warn him to govern, unlike the Median kings, by obeying the laws, and never to imagine that one man ought to possess more than all others.[3] He believes that even the worst men will think it a service to themselves that the best should have the leading of them.[4] He holds everything noble or beautiful possessed by his subjects to be an ornament to himself. He rejects great presents, even those of gratitude, saying, "You shall not make me such a man as will run up and down, bartering my services for money." He "lays up resources by means of his conduct."[5] He treats women with noble delicacy and deep respect,[6] and his advice to young men on matters of love are mingled with genial humor. He opens battle with prayer: "They who fear the gods in peril, are all the less afraid of men."[7] He creates not only a perfect commissariat and perfect discipline, but an *esprit de corps*. He disparages excited appeals to soldiers, as compared with the systematic culture of valor and virtue. He conducts war with unheard-of mildness, dismissing prisoners, forgiving foes, slaying only those in arms, leaving the nations free from exactions and service. He frees slaves and makes them soldiers.[8] He pities heroic men in defeat and fighting hopelessly, and even draws off his conquering army to preserve their lives.[9] He treats his allies with great delicacy, deferring the dinner-hour for himself and his army till their arrival, as well as all partition of booty, and doing nothing without regard to their feelings. He wins all hearts not only by nobility

1 Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, v. 2, 3.
2 Ibid., viii. 3.
3 Ibid., i. 3; viii. 5.
4 Ibid., ii. 2.
5 Ibid., iii. 12.
6 See dying address to his sons.
7 Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, iii. 3.
8 Ibid., iv. 4, 6.
9 Ibid., vii. 1.

and kindness, but also by tact, overcoming in this way the jealousy of Cyaxares the Median king, whom he supersedes in the love of the army, and who finds himself reduced to a cipher by the man he has made general of his troops.[1] He takes up the cause of laboring men, sees that the agricultural populations are well cared for, and praises the lot of those who live by honest toil. He enforces division of labor. He lays down wise principles of production and distribution, and living use of capital, and prescribes due order in all administration, makes litigants go to referees, raises the best to power without distinction of rank, sends judges through his States to rectify disorders, and opens postal roads and stations for swift couriers. He honors the fine arts, and spares Sardis on their account. For himself, he is better pleased to give than to receive, and leads others by force of example to virtue. He is husband of one wife, and thoroughly loyal to his vows. He excels not so much in military conduct as in love of man, and dies grateful for a life of perfect success, exhorting his children to love each other, to believe in immortality, and next to the gods to seek the good of all mankind. He enjoins that no splendor be seen about his remains, which must be as speedily as possible returned to earth.

This noble ideal is marred by the limitations of its framer and the conditions of the age. Xenophon's Cyrus, assuming the necessity of willing obedience to a good-willing power from those who have been used to servitude or must be held to it, attempts to reconcile these conditions by a training which presumes them all, and treats the subjects of it with the tenderness of a father for his children, while depriving them of the right of bearing arms and disqualifying them from even desiring the means of freedom.[2] This is

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, v. 4, 5; vii. 4; viii. 3.
[2] Ibid., viii. 1–8.

a piece of Xenophon's Spartan prejudices, quickened to a sense of the duties involved in it for one of such humanity as Cyrus. It was probably in accordance with the observed customs of the Persians of his day, that Xenophon, for the same purpose of securing authority to the world-rulers, makes Cyrus advise his countrymen to wear high shoes to appear taller than they were, and to paint their faces to give them beauty and dignity.[1] His statement that the "adoration" he reports Cyrus to have received for the first time from the Persians on his state-procession from the palace in Babylon, as the spontaneous tribute of his people, should have been allowed him by the cultured Greeks (they certainly refused it to the later Achæmenidan kings), is only to be explained by his sense of a special divine authority in Cyrus to receive the world's worship as the "Star in the East" of a religious faith. How natural it was to form this personal theory of the origin of the Persian custom appears in the later deification of Jesus, even in his infancy, when Christianity had become a religious power, and needed verification of its claims in the history of its founder. The personal character of Xenophon's admiration of Persian royalty is shared by Plato, who makes his Athenian guest in "The Laws" praise Cyrus and his men for moderation in the exercise of power, sharing their freedom with others, and leading them to equality; the magnanimous king "granting liberty of speech to all who were able to advise," so that "progress was effected through freedom, friendship, and communion of intellect." Plato's criticism of Cyrus is confined to ascribing the decay of the State to the custom introduced by him of intrusting the education of princes to women, whose petting made them vicious, — as in the case of Cyrus' own children.[2]

We shall do justice to the significance of these Greek tributes when we consider that they are traceable directly

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, viii. 1–3.

[2] *Laws*, bk. iii.

to the very highest moral and intellectual authority in ancient history. The teaching of Socrates produced two fruits in philosophical romance, — the Atlantis of Plato, and the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon. The description of the early inhabitants of the great Atlantic Island, — of the rise of their vast empire through their frugality and sobriety, their gentleness and wisdom, their piety and humanity, and their willing obedience to divine kings; of their gradual corruption through luxury, and of the valor with which the Athenians met their immense invading hosts, till both nations were destroyed by earthquake and flood ten thousand years before, — can have been suggested only by the history of the rise and fall of the Great Empire of the East, and its relations with Athens in recent times.[1] It grew confessedly out of the same desire to illustrate the ideal Socratic State, with Xenophon's "Cyropædia;" although in this case not Persia, but a primeval Athens is the central figure, while the perfection of Atlantis also is, like Persian virtues, concentrated in her earliest royalty. Xenophon wrote his "Cyropædia" to illustrate the philosophical principle of free government, as consisting in the willing obedience of men to what they recognized as just and humane, as he wrote his "Hiero the Despot" to show the converse of the same principle, — that unwilling obedience is slavery and ruin. In his praise of the aristocratic side of Cyrus' institutes, we see the Socratic dislike of extreme democracy as it existed in Greece. Cyrus is himself a pure disciple of Socrates in his constant presumption that all men desired to do right and to be rightly governed, in his identification of politics with ethics, in his cardinal principles of temperance, justice, courage, and love, in respecting the religions of all nations; and while not hesitating to join in their rites, yet dispensing with diviners, and obeying the inward voice, making

[1] Jowett's Translation of *Timæus*, 19; *Critias*, 109–120.

humbleness and noble endeavor his true prayer, because the gods could act only by laws, never by caprice.[1] His doctrine of forgiveness, and his death, looking forward to a future life, are both Socratic. It is true that Socrates would not have approved the suicide of Panthea upon the death of her husband; but this event is but an incident of the most tender and touching story of mutual love, honor, and fidelity between the sexes in all ancient fiction, and is so related as to show Cyrus in the noblest light. It is safe to say that no tribute so exalted was ever paid to any people, when the position and character of those who paid it are fully weighed, as those of Plato and Xenophon to the founders of the Persian State. It becomes the more striking when we consider that the tribute of the latter especially was almost wholly to *personal government*, in a high sense of the word, as a righteous resort from the excesses of Greek democracy or ochlocracy. And here we must note Xenophon's purpose to present the practical as well as philosophical ideal of sovereignty. He was in most respects one of the clearest heads in all antiquity on matters of political and military science. And we may well ask what a name must Cyrus have left behind him, when we find such a man ascribing to him almost every great economical principle or measure by which later monarchies have combined their own preservation with the prosperity of their subjects! At the same time, the condition of the ancient world was thoroughly recognized, from the best Greek experience, as needing above all things the remedy of personal government righteously applied. From this should issue a systematic moral training in ideals suitable to free men, combined, as in the Spartan discipline, with contempt for the mere pursuit of wealth. The king must carry the force of personal example into immediate contact with his subjects. Hence every one must come to the palace to

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, i. 6.

prove his loyalty, the rich must not live away from the capital, a standing army must take the place of uncertain feudal services,[1] the best people must dine at the king's table, administration must be watched by secret police, the civil and military powers be vested in distinct persons,[2] and offices be rightly and gifts generously bestowed. The king must be the moral ideal,[3] and rule by incessant toil and vigilant foresight, as one personally responsible for the welfare of his people, with a "thirst for doing good," and for winning obedience through love.[4]

We have thus presented Xenophon's ideal Cyrus in full, not because of its historical truth, which is probably much inferior to the story of Herodotus, nor as unaware that this is the wisdom of Greece rather than of Persia; but because the power of Cyrus' name to draw it out from such a source, is mark of a position in the ancient world which deserves the most profound regard.

To the Greek mind, to the simplicity of Herodotus no less than to the philosophy and ethics of the Socratic school, Cyrus was the child of Destiny, as he was of Providential purpose to the Hebrew, — to the one as a grand personal force transforming human society and politics; to the other as the instrument of Jahveh to restore and exalt his chosen race. The story of Crœsus is constructed in the interest of this belief. In his relations with the king of Lydia, this Son of Destiny, raised from the depths of the far East, at once recognizes the existing moral and intellectual achievements of mankind, and proves his own superiority to the will of the gods of Asia and of Greece. In this view I think I can hardly be mistaken. Crœsus for the Greeks, especially the Ionians, is king of the typical tribe in Asiatic civilization, and conqueror of the most advanced Ionian cities of Asia Minor. The Lydians had the

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, ii. 1.
[2] Ibid., viii. 6.
[3] Ibid., i. 6.
[4] Ibid., v. 1.

prestige of political wisdom and social resource; they were the first employers of gold and silver coin, the first retailers of goods; they had the wit to invent games, as diversion from suffering in a long and grievous famine.[1] Crœsus' resources were fabulous, his conquests vast, his wisdom proverbial alike for shrewdness and breadth. His capital was the resort of Greek sages, the mother and nurse of Greek literature. So great was his interest in Hellenic culture, that he sent splendid gifts to the temples, consulted the oracles, testing their knowledge, and followed the guidance of Apollo in making war on Persia. He was the common ally and honored friend of Babylon, Egypt, Greece. Nothing could exceed the contempt of his wise men for the rude hosts of Iran. On the funeral pyre he calls upon Solon, as the one sage who could comprehend his downfall and despair. In the Greek worship of Cyrus, Crœsus holds a place similar to that of the Magi in the Christian legend of the destined Christ. It was this great historical figure that naturally expressed the failure of all existing wisdom, power, and even faith, before the advent of the new Sun rising in the East, — an event which might well stir the Greek world to serious thought. Conquered by Cyrus and cast on the funeral pile (probably, as Herodotus intimates,[2] and as may be inferred from Xenophon, without intention to carry out the barbarity, since it was wholly contrary to the spirit of Cyrus to do so), he acknowledges this decree of Destiny, — reproaching the Pythian oracle with urging him on by delusions to war against one whom none can withstand. Apollo can send rain to put out the fires; but even he cannot turn back the destiny of Cyrus to supersede both Lydian and Greek. Permitted to send a message to the Delphian god to ask if he is not ashamed of his doings, and if the gods of Greece

[1] Herodotus, i. 94.

[2] Ibid., i. 86, 88. See Rawlinson, note A. to Herodotus, bk. i.

were usually ungrateful, Crœsus receives for answer that it was not in Apollo to contravene the decrees of Fate. The Greek Prometheus is illumined by suffering to foresee the coming of Destiny to release him, and overthrow the existing gods in the interest of man. Here it is not a defiant Titan that throws himself on the deliverance to come, but a conquered religion, confessing its day to be passed in presence of the actual destined deliverer. Is it fanciful to find this hinted in the smile with which Cyrus grants to Crœsus permission to reproach the oracle instead of rebuking him, as a loyal Greek would have done, for the impiety of the thought?

Moreover, it is in recognizing what is noble in the older beliefs and their confessors, that the new becomes noble and free. Whether intending or not to burn Crœsus, Cyrus is moved to tenderness by the self-humiliation of the noble victim and his piety in view of death, reflecting that he also is a man, and must meet the changes of fortune and the retribution of just laws. The man of Destiny must respect morality, and learn its sovereignty over all human things. The supernatural must be under the same rule. The miracle of rain which protects Crœsus, helps also to convince Cyrus that his captive deserves human as well as Divine care.[1] The wisdom of the past fails not to serve the noble purposes of the new epoch and the higher fate. Cyrus consults Crœsus in important matters, listens to his maxims practical and prudential, his reflections on the instability of things. None the less is it always as master of the occasion that he listens and accepts them. The central force of the teaching is in his own personal character and will.

The ideal personality of Cyrus, thus depicted by the imagination of the ages which followed his career, points, as few historical ideals do, to an actual force in some degree

[1] Herodotus, i. 87.

correspondent to its supposed effect. As founder of the great empire which directed Greek history, even when wasted on the field, and as restorer of the Jews to their native land, carrying with them the faith and culture which have made them so large a factor in modern civilization, he is in many important respects the most impressive figure of ancient times, and a root whence the world's progress springs. Mr. Grote says that "while the conquests of Cyrus contributed to assimilate the distinct types of civilization in Western Asia, — not by elevating the worse, but by degrading the better, — upon the native Persians themselves they operated as an extraordinary stimulus, provoking alike their pride, ambition, cupidity, and warlike propensities."[1] This judgment seems to me to overlook both the historical conditions and the character of the great Persian's work. I must regard it as a very imperfect estimate of the influence of that large relation to the ancient world to which Cyrus introduced his people; but it is still more unjust to Cyrus himself. He was not a reconstructor of nations only, but a reformer of the barbarous methods of Asiatic warfare. All traditions picture him as of singular humanity in the treatment of conquered nations. Most constructions of this kind in later ages pass over the other Achæmenides, — not only the feeble Darius Codomannus, the sensual Artaxerxes II., the cruel Ochus, the voluptuous Xerxes, but Darius the great organizer, and Cambyses the iconoclast, — pass over the immense influence on foreign States exercised by the gifts and gold of Artaxerxes I., to rest on the person of Cyrus. Down to the latest days of Persian nationality, as we have seen, this precedence lasts, in the poets and historians of Islam. In Cyrus only they find the "father" of nations; he only thinks himself adorned in adorning others; he only strives to heal discord, to reward noble conduct, to win the hearts

[1] Grote: *History of Greece*, iv. 216.

of men by generous appreciation of merit, by forgiveness of injuries, by tender consideration of the weaknesses and wants of others. He is as pure in life as he is powerful in arms; has the majesty of human omnipotence with none of its caprice; would fain unite autocracy of power with democracy of spirit; is at once ideal ruler and ideal man. It is scarcely rational to suppose that all this testimony to one so conspicuous in history as the creator of the Persian empire, so known to Babylon, Egypt, and Greece, can be without historical guarantees; that a repute which all the admitted degeneracy of the Persian kings and people since his day could not cover up from the sharpest eyes and finest minds of that Athenian people, to whom the name of barbarian was an offence, can be a baseless fiction.

As we have already said, that but for the preparatory work of the "great kings" Alexander would not have found Asia open to his unifying march; that the consciousness of a common empire, and the demand for a common political administration did far more than the little troop of fifty thousand with which he penetrated Asia, to effect the conquest of the multitudinous tribes,—so we may now add that the powerful initiation of these influences must be ascribed to "Cyrus the Great." As it is greater to create than to organize, he eclipses even Darius, without whom the empire would have perished in a day. A single sentence will perhaps express the direct bearing of his life upon the Alexandrine campaigns. No mere helplessness of a disorganized State, no weakness of Oriental nerve, no absence of leaders, no over-confidence of Darius II., did so much to effect their amazing success as the previous preparation of the people of Asia to accept the personal government of one who deserved to hold sway; the sense of community in an expectation of world-purpose and destiny with which Cyrus and his conquering Persians had at once inspired the East. From his day

Iran meant no more a vast desert of warring hordes, but the Persia of the Great King, the chosen Solar Fire of the World. The savage warfare of Iran and Turan gave place to an empire making firm stand against incursions from the Northern wilds. The feudal chiefs of Iran were subordinated to the throne, without loss of freedom or self-respect; and the conquest of Ionia opened the civilization of the East and of the West to each other. From his constructive conquests dates not the first but the most radical intermixture of races, whence grew the breadth of European experience. He raised the barrier to the Northern swarms whose mastery of Persia would have swept back Aryan civilization, delayed for centuries Aryan immigration into Europe and the Germanic conquests with their vast results to freedom and science, and so altered the whole course of history. Rome herself, broadened by her Parthian and Sassanide wars, and stirred by Persian passion out of her narrow and hard materialism, showed in the humanities of her later legislation that she had felt the pressure of Cyrus' heroic hand. Hebrew psalmody, Hebrew law, the piety of Jahvism, as the mother of Christian trust and love, born and nurtured in the exile, reached its height in the exaltation of Cyrus, the "Righteous One whom Jahveh loveth," the "Messiah," the "Anointed Saviour of the World." No other messiah has the Hebrew found but this one, for whom the girdle of the loins of kings was loosed, that he might open the prison gates; at whose touch the wilderness and the solitary place were made glad, a highway was opened for the ransomed of Jahveh, and the deserts of Judea rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. To be the inspirer of the later Isaiah was to hold a place second to none in the sources of Hebrew and Christian faith. His capture of Babylon broke the pride of Semitic polytheism. His restoration of the Jews effaced at a word the hostilities of races and creeds, and gave the

first strong impulse to universal religion, to the brotherhood of nations and of times. The victories of Cyrus were indeed the sunrise in the east. The turning of the river that rolled through Babylon was the original of that wonderful picture of a great Deliverer which Christianity has made Jesus claim as meant for himself,[1] — the turning-point of ancient history. The same hand which smote down the old gods of Asia, set up the coming God of Europe. To the feet of this great Master of Nations converge the lines of religious movement as we trace them backward from their widest expansion in modern times. And while studying the manifold bearings of his life on succeeding ages, I am scarcely surprised that a brilliant French historian, whose ingenious conclusions concerning the Persians, however imperfectly sustained in some respects, are highly worthy of consideration, should say emphatically that "there is nothing else of so intense an interest in all human history;"[2] and that without him "the Europe of to-day never would have existed."

We pause before this magnificent landmark of progress. Let us reflect that we see the forerunner and type of that principle which, for good and for evil, has controlled the great religions of modern times. A man stands in the place of God. It is not meant that the man is here held to *be* God, though this is the tendency; and both in earlier and later Iranian phases of monarchy the monarch often assumes the name and worship of the god. The Persian did not *worship* his king, certainly not in the days of Cyrus. He was forbidden by his religious law even to make images of Ormuzd, an invisible god. He made only symbolic signs of deity hovering over the king. But these were signs of personal Will, the essence of sovereignty alike in God and king. Though the king was not God to the Persian, then, he was the image of God, — an image if not

[1] Isaiah, lxi. 1; Luke, iv. 16–21. [2] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, i. 511.

made with hands, yet representing in human form the authority of that Will of whose human and divine elements — choice of chiefs, and commandment of God — he was the combined result. Later times and religions show how naturally the personal God himself becomes identified with the man specially made in his image. Though for the Persian the reality of Ormuzd soars over the head of the Achæmenide, yet a man stands in the place of God. It is the form of a Person that we discern dimly through the shadows of the past, and the ancient world is at his feet. It is the sovereignty of a will. But this will worships; it recognizes moral laws, and obeys the spirit of love; it desires to command a *willing* obedience, to win the hearts of men, to reconcile and succor them; it knows that its rights involve duties; it treats the tribes of a continent as one race, which needs and wishes to be governed, but has the right to be governed well. And we thus discern the justification in its own day and for those conditions in which it was born — for the true birthday was in the Persia of the great Cyrus — of the principle of *Personal Government;* a principle which more than two thousand years of political and religious history were to develop and work through, until it now finds its value in having prepared the way for a higher stage of progress no longer to be delayed.

Such is the Cyropædia of real history, holding in its bosom an end and purpose beyond the "great kings," ancient and modern, beyond the Messiahs, the Prophets of Jahveh and of Allah, the authoritative Incarnations, the theological types of Personal Government, of whom it is made up, and whose sway, both ideal and actual, but foreshadows a real unity of man with God above and beneath these limitations by exclusive types of personal Will. It is in Cyrus that we see its fine foreshadowing in its largest prophetic aspect. Not the "bright altars" of a Hebrew

Jahveh, but the altarless presence and fane of a human potentate standing for justice and mercy, are "thronged with prostrate kings."

> "See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
> Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend!"

II.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

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WHEN Alexander of Macedon destroyed the Achæmenidan dynasty at a blow, he not only assumed the style and embraced the system of the native rulers, but became at once the national ideal. Greece denounced him as the destroyer of her liberties, the arrogant restorer of her twenty thousand political convicts from exile.[1] Persia, on the contrary, hailed him as her deliverer from national disintegration and dynastic decay. Plutarch relates that Darius himself exchanged his contempt of the stripling who sought to snatch his crown, for a recognition which went so far as to pray that if it went ill with himself, the gods would "suffer none but Alexander to possess the throne of Cyrus;" and adds: "So true is it, that virtue is the victor still."[2] Only an overmastering personality could hold the numerous principalities of Iran under a common sway; and this inflexible requirement of their nature and traditions could find nothing but its own irony in the later Achæmenidan kings. But when this young hero, fresh from the conquest of Greece and Egypt, threw himself single-handed, with the assurance of a god and as a retributive fate, upon the vast empire of the "king of kings," the thunder of his tread, the most rapid and resistless in the history of war, awoke the old Iranian loyalty to personal Will, with its glorious traditions; and the prestige of Cyrus and of Rustem, of the historical and the mythological ideals alike, gathered about his head. A million spears were grounded at the lifting of his arm. The Gordian knot flies apart at the touch of his sword;

[1] Grote, xii. 306.

[2] *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, ii. 6, 7.

he needs not untie it to prove himself the master for whom its mystery waits. From his first defiance of Darius, described in the legend[1] as a refusal of the accustomed tribute of golden eggs, because "the vital bird of him who sent the eggs has deserted the cage of the body," or as the return of a bitter herb for the bat and ball sent by that monarch to satirize his youth,[2] through the successive capture of Babylon, Susa, Persepolis, Ecbatana, the subjugation of eastern Iran, the Bactrian and Southern campaigns, to the coronation and apotheosis at Babylon, — every step in that marvellous march was almost as much an ovation as a struggle. The magnificent record of heroic toils and pains which his Greek eulogist brings to prove him independent of the favors of fortune,[3] has its counterpart in the ardor of submission, as to an expected one, which greeted his coming as soon as the quality of the man was felt.[4] The Lydian confederacy welcomed him. Babylon and Susa threw open their gates to receive him. Tribe after tribe gave in their adhesion. "After the battle of Arbela," says Plutarch, "Alexander was acknowledged king of all Asia."[5] This expectancy is indeed an element needed to explain the unparalleled success of a handful of Macedonian soldiers. No great effects in political or religious reconstructions are explicable without such conditions precedent. The first resistance was made by Darius with vast resources. But after the first blows the empire could never be rallied, and there remained only outbreaks of individual States, jealous of their local liberties. The power of Alexander's prestige was made cumulative by events; and the fact is worth emphasizing, that no great rebellion of conquered tribes occurred in his campaigns, save that

[1] Shea: *Mirkhond*, pp. 361, 362. [2] Ibid.

[3] Plutarch: *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, ii. 8–13.

[4] Arrian: *Expedition of Alexander*, iii. 17, 23, 28; iv. 1, 15. Curtius, v. 1, 2. Arrian, i. 25; ii. 13.

[5] Arrian, *passim*. Plutarch: *Life of Alexander*.

of the Bactrians, which was caused by the propagation of a false story that Alexander intended to seize and put to death all the leading men.[1]

When the Iranian tribes saw the one general who could have resisted him, Memnon of Rhodes, die before striking a blow; when they saw their king Darius ignobly seeking safety in flight from the field of Issus, and the conqueror enhancing a noble behavior towards his captive family by punishing his assassins; when they saw the conqueror rush like a tempest across Central Asia to destroy the Bactrian rival who had thought to rise to empire by the murder of his king; when satrap after satrap tried his hand at rebellion in vain; when every hour proved the tremendous capabilities of a will which suppressed the conspiracies of generals, shamed away the reluctance of soldiers, and broke into ungovernable wrath at the very suspicion of disloyalty in a friend; when he dared to offend his own followers by committing the satrapies to native chiefs; when he left the States their own institutions and freedom of worship; when he took counsel of the Chaldean Magi, rebuilt the fallen shrines of Babylon, restored the abandoned tomb of Cyrus, and espoused the daughters of native kings, — we cannot wonder that the national dislike of an invader should be absorbed in admiration for one, even though a Greek in speech, and plainly purposing to play the part of a god, on whom rested so visibly the tokens of the right to rule. No wonder native volunteers crowded forward to garrison his conquered towns. No wonder that when his army refused to follow him farther, he found such a host of native youth rise ready to his hand that the legions were roused to new zeal, and his march to India showed miscellaneous hordes of Persians trained in the disciplines of the Greek.[2] No wonder cities sprang

[1] Williams: *Life of Alexander* (Family Library). Arrian, iv. 1.
[2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 562.

up as by magic on navigable streams and in the desert, as if a new birth had come over the whole land. No wonder that the sympathies of races could be fertilized by intermarriage on the largest scale, beginning with his own example and followed by eighty of his chiefs. No wonder that the hordes of the ancient monarchy found free circulation to revive enterprise and trade, and that this intercourse of races opened with electric speed into the nobler commerce of ideas and faiths. But these effects, which seemed supernatural to historians and philosophers for many ages after his day, were as largely due to the supreme command always exercised over Iranian thought and conduct by idealizations of personal Will, as to the actual qualities of Alexander's genius. It is plain that these qualities would have had but little power to move the world, but for the immense leverage afforded by the other.

The pupil of Aristotle, the reader of Homer by day and night, the preserver of Pindar's house from the sacking of Thebes; whose camp[1] was a lyceum of philosophy and science, a school of historians and poets as well as of generals; the enthusiast for a civilization that should embrace and unify the world, aspiring to teach humanities to the rudest tribes, and Greek order and law to the jealous feudal lords of Asia, and "by mixing lives, manners, customs, wedlocks, as in a festival goblet, to make every one take the whole habitable world for a country, of which his camp and army should be the metropolis," — this man, without looking too closely at the strange mixture of dispositions and motives, or at the uncertainty of tradition which besets a true estimate of Alexander's life, was indeed the higher ideal for which Nineveh, Babylon, Mede, and Persian had educated the races of Iran. Again the native genius finds its living symbol; nerve-fire condensed into personality,

[1] Pyrrho the sceptic, Anaxarchus, disciple of Democritus, Callisthenes, Ptolemy, Perdiccas, accompanied him. Diogenes Laertius, ix. Also Zeller's *Stoics*.

darting like the lightning east and west, and filling the world with its flames. For him the elements are made; his foot plays all the pedals of the world's music; history is but the echo of his march. The continents are dead and silent everywhere, save where he moves and summons them to renovated life.

Alexander is not European after all. He belongs to Iran. Of the thirteen years of his reign, eleven are spent on the soil of Asia. Once leaving Macedon for the East, he never returns. Greece emigrates in him; her gods follow the star of a master which may have risen in the West, but which stays proudly in the Eastern sky, and the Magi are not his guests but his hosts. Greek Dionysus found a home in Eastern Asia, and men saw in the debauches in which the conqueror stained his hand with the blood of friends the god's revenge for his neglected worship, or for the woes of his beloved Thebes. A new Hercules frees Prometheus on a new Caucasus at the opposite boundary of Iran, and his name is Alexander of Macedon.

It was not without more positive grounds than these that Iranian tradition adopted the invader into the line of native kings.[1] For this was in ethnic truth the Agamemnon of the East returning to claim his ancestral domain as well as to punish the Achæmenides for invading Greece. He is Iranian not only by the scene of his triumphs, but by his Aryan descent, and even by the Orientalism of his government, manners, and dress, and by the ungovernable passions which the situation developed in him, over which even his Greek panegyrist can only mourn.[2] This personality has the true Iranian dimensions, is the true type of inward Iranian Dualism and moral struggle. The fierce war of Ormuzd and Ahriman rages here on a scale which

[1] Firdûsî: *Shâh-Nâmeh.* Hamza of Ispatian; El Masûdî; Tabarî.

[2] Arrian, iv. 8.

involves the fate of civilization. So the native legend adopts him, and he becomes for it, as afterward for the Mahometan chroniclers, the legitimate son of Dârâb (Darius) by a daughter of Philip of Macedon, and the half-brother of Darius Ochus, who is Dârâb's son by another wife.[1] He is the Iskander of the Shâh-Nâmeh,[2] brought up at his father Philip's court, unconscious, like Cyrus, of his royal rights, and succeeds to a tributary throne only to throw off allegiance, and by defeat of Dârâ to reach his ancestral crown. The historical groundwork of the conquest is worked up into a tale of mutual tenderness and trust between the brother kings. Iskander weeps over the dying Dârâ, receives his blessing, promises to avenge his murder, to marry his daughter, and to spread the faith of Zoroaster. The empire receives him with joy, and there follows an epoch of order, prosperity, and glory; while the true successor of Kaiânian kings makes Egypt and India his tributaries, and attended by prodigies and omens visits all the sacred shrines of Iran, and restores the supremacy it had once enjoyed. The legend knows nothing of the enormities which historians have ascribed to that march from Tyre to the heart of India, the massacres in Phœnician cities, the deportations, the burning of Persepolis, and the slaughter on the sacred soil of Bactria. But they had not been forgotten; nay, in some of the religious traditions, they have been greatly exaggerated. It was this very interfusion of terribly destructive elements with far more conspicuous ones that were truly creative and humane, which made his history attractive to a race whose very consciousness turned on the struggle of good and evil powers for

[1] The *Shâh-Nâmeh*, the heroic epos of Persian legends and traditions covering the whole life of Iran down to Alexander, gathered and compiled at the court of Ghuznîn, was finally wrought up by Fîrdûsi, in the eleventh century.

[2] Even Spiegel, who singularly enough thinks the Iranians did not like Alexander, cannot find any ground for believing this tradition to have a foreign origin. *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 599.

possession of the heroic will. These traditions endowed Iskander with the symbolic gifts of this personal ideal, its spells for commanding Nature, its talismans to bind demonic powers. They gave him the physical strength to slay monsters, to repeat the labors of Hercules and his prototype the sun, the intuition to foresee his destiny, the piety to recognize the insignificance of kingdoms compared with the service of God and man.

Nor does it appear that Firdûsî, the restorer of the Iranian legendary history, added any more of Islamitic coloring to the traditional fame of Iskander than he gave to those earlier heroes of the national legend, whose type, thoroughly the same as Iskander's, has evidently preserved its original features even under his Mussulman hands. As it was the fitness of Alexander to fill this old type of ideal personality that attracted the national genius, so only in him could it rise to the height of its historical function. To all ordinary personal forces that genius refused to respond. The succession he bequeathed "to the strongest" did not command its allegiance. The brief career of the Seleucidæ, lasting little more than half a century, only irritated the people by using the powers he had gained to suppress their religious faith and the local self-government by which he had won their hearts. Though the dynasty was not without energy as a whole, though Seleucus I. had great gifts and swayed an empire almost as large as that of Alexander himself, and though Antiochus Epiphanes achieved a fame as wide as it was odious (the Ahriman of Jew and Gentile), these heirs (*diadochoi*) of Alexander's empire were a blank for Persian imagination, and furnished it no ideal food. The Seleucidæ on the Tigris and the Orontes, and the Parthian and Græco-Bactrian dynasties which ruled respectively the western and eastern provinces that seceded from their empire, were dropped from the national chronology. It wholly passed

over the five and a half centuries between the death of Alexander and the advent of the Sassanide Ardeshîr, who in the very spirit of the old heroic legend restored Iranian freedom and faith.

It was the glory of Iran to feed the imagination of those races which were making history with colossal types of heroïc Will. By no mytho-poetic accident did her great Caspian headland front Europe with that eternal symbol of Prometheus, unconquerable sufferer for the good of man; while close beside it towers the form of Zohâk, image of tyranny and hate, bound in hopeless chains by Ferîdûn, the spirit of freedom. Here personality first becomes a universal idea, a world-consciousness. As Cyrus had been the ideal of the highest Hebrew and Greek intelligence, so Alexander became the ideal of far more widely-spread intellectual and religious forces at a later date. From the fascination of his world-opening career no corner of civilization was exempt. For centuries hosts of chronicles, itineraries, romances, myths, and legends multiplied around it, of every race and every quality; but all so dominated by his dazzling personality, that the thoughtful historic annals of Arrian and Diodorus and Strabo, and the learned (but not so trustworthy) compilation of Plutarch, prove often as puzzling to the historic sense as the palpable tissues of fable spun by a pseudo-Callisthenes, or a Quintus Curtius, or by those mythologists of Egypt, Armenia, and Rome, from whom their threads were borrowed.

This grasp of the imagination, then first, we may say, set free to work upon genuinely historic materials and forces, knew no limits in geographical space. All the weird stories of supernatural phenomena and monstrous shapes of beasts and men, with which the unexplored wilds of Central Asia had been peopled, mainly on the authority of Ctesias's Persian history, were woven into the marching robes of

this king of Nature and men.[1] His glory was the honor of all nations. Like Persia, Egypt claimed him as in the direct line of her kings.[2] The god of the Lybian desert predicts his coming, and owns him as his son. Sesostris, conqueror of continents, rises from his throne among the dead, and visits him in vision, to sink his own fame in the greater master who shall found a metropolis of nations, and identify Egypt with an all-unifying name. Darius Ochus and Serapis pay him similar honors. The Jew makes him a worshipper of Jahveh and the savior of his Holy Temple.[3] The Alexandrian Greek makes him abolish all the old cults, yet not by force, and become the apostle of a universal theism, whose prayer to the "Eternal One," at the head of his army, brings the Caspian mountains together, that he may build gates of brass to bar out Scythian Gog and Magog forever from the lands of the true faith.[4]

Age after age brought fresh accessions to that Egyptian epopee which, under the assumed name of Callisthenes, continued down to the time of Firdûsî, and even to the Middle Ages, to be the main stream of this mythic lore.[5] It was conspicuous among the resources of Firdûsî's muse. In this legend an Egyptian Magus substitutes himself for the god Ammon, and brings about with the wife of Philip the divine birth he has himself predicted to her. Alexander afterwards kills him; but his statue at Memphis speaks out to hail the world-master at his coming, and places a globe on his head. Here Alexander instructs his master Aristotle even in childhood, reconciles his parents, slays his father's murderers, but scorns to harm

[1] Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xx. 64).

[2] Pseudo-Callisthenes.

[3] Josephus: *Antiquities of the Jews*, xi. chaps. v. viii.

[4] Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*, p. 333.

[5] Through the Armenian translation, probably in the fifth century. For account of Pseudo-Callisthenes, see Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. p 586, *et seq.* And Lassen: *Indische Alterth.*, ii. 734. Also Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*

a foe who wounded him in battle; forgives his enemies, makes war only for humanity's sake, and binds the nations in brotherly ties; and, so testifies the Byzantine age, dives to the depths of ocean and mounts to heaven upon eagle's wings.[1]

In later legends of the same cycle (plainly Mahometan), he follows the setting sun to reach the fountain of immortality; nay, he hears the admonition of the Angel of Judgment, waiting on his mountains for God's command to blow the last trumpet. He learns the inherent necessity of evil in the treasures of this world from the heap of stones beside the way, from which he who takes and he who refrains from taking shall be equally miserable; because when they are found to be gems, the one becomes wretched because he has not taken more, and the other because he has not taken any when he might have had what he would. His death is foretold him by a king whom he finds throned within a mountain, and by two trees of the desert that speak, the one by day, the other by night, — the warning of Nature, if we may interpret the myth, that even her master is also her child, and must return to her bosom. When he lays his hand on the coffers of the kings of Iran, she goes out of her way to repeat the same omen by a monstrous birth. Greeks and Persians contend for the right to bury his body; but the oracle gives it to Alexandria, where the wise of all nations gather to celebrate his obsequies.

As the Jew claimed him as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, so the Mussulman finds him at his Kaaba, and a Syrian poet sings his praise as a follower of Christ.[2] Mahomet him-

[1] The Mahometan legends say that Alexander came to Abraham while he was building the temple of Mecca with Ismael, and acknowledged him as the messenger of Allah, and walked seven times round the place. They describe him as able to turn day into night and night into day, by unfurling one or the other of two magic standards, and so defeating his foes at his will; and even as having found himself so near the sun in a dream that he was able to seize him at his two ends. Weil: *Biblical Legends*, p. 70.

[2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 607.

self celebrates him, it is commonly believed, under the name Dhu'lkarnain (the Two-horned), as a prophet sent to chastise the impious and reward the just with easy yoke; who prefers the service of God to the tributes of the nations.[1] Mussulman writers placed him beside Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and the rest to whom revelations had come. In the Chronicle of Nizâmi, he is the son of a pious Hebrew woman, adopted by Philip, — a saint and sage, more than a king.[2] By the gift of a stone, which outweighs everything save a handful of dust, the angels cure him of the desire to gain the whole world. A city whence men are summoned away one by one, to vanish in a mountain, and cannot be held back from obeying the call even by his kingly power, teaches him the inevitableness of death. How mythology, the world over, holds all lords and masters to spiritual realities and ethical laws! What transforming power there is in the wand of imagination, to bring a world-conqueror from his throne of centuries to his knees, before the primal conditions of human life and personal success! — a process whose operation illustrates the unhistorical character of idealization of the founders of religions and States, while at the same time it teaches that such imaginative constructions are under control of the conscience and aspirations of mankind.

To Mirkhond, the great Persian historian of the fifteenth century, Alexander's name signifies "lover of wisdom."[3] He is the ideal philosopher as well as king. He receives from Philip political counsels as fine as those which the Cyrus of Xenophon hears from Cambyses; for the natural flow of wisdom from age to youth, from father to son, is a premise of our ideal sense of continuity, which asserts itself wherever it is permitted to do so. He must make no

[1] *Koran*, sura xviii. 89, 90.

[2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. p. 607.

[3] Shea's Translation (Oriental Fund Series), p. 368, 369.

distinction in his treatment of rich and poor, Persian and Turk, remote and near, farmer and soldier, native and stranger. He must never be indifferent to the sufferer, nor oppress the poor.[1] Before the assembled nobles, after his father's death, he disclaims all special rights, consulting their judgment as one of themselves, and accepts the throne only at their desire. So for near two thousand years endures the repute of Alexander for having identified his conquests with local and personal liberties. His victories are in Allah's name, and his letters are Moslem sermons. Even while, as true Moslem, he must of course have destroyed "the accursed faith of the Magi," it is admitted that he had all their science translated into Greek.[2] All the wise men in Persia, India, Macedon, shower on him the didactics of ancient wisdom; but not even the Brahmins can reprove his destructive trade of war without being silenced by his credentials from the Creator to overturn unbelief and wrong everywhere, — "commands which I will faithfully execute till I die."[3] He institutes discussions between rival creeds and schools, and exalts the Hindu sage, who can answer all his questions and interpret all symbolic acts and gifts. He answers those who ask things impossible, even for his power, with edifying self-depreciation and humble recognition of human limits. Here is the Mahometan ideal of Nûshirvân and Akbar referred back to a period eight hundred years before Mahomet was born. Into this tribute-heap are thrown aphoristic treasures, old and new, till the conversational wisdom of Iskander is a catechism of the virtues for any age.

"In what should a king show perseverance?" "In meditating on the interests of his people by night, and securing them by day." — "From what do you gain most pleasure?" "From rewarding good service." — "The day passed without redressing some wrong or grant-

[1] Shea's Translation (Oriental Fund Series), p. 377. [2] Ibid., p. 396. [3] Ibid., p. 405.

ing some petition, is no part of life." — "My instructor deserves more of my respect than my father, because my father brought me from heaven to earth; but Aristotle raised me from earth to heaven." — "I refuse to make stealthy attacks, by night, on an enemy." — "The noble mind, even of a poor man, is forever held in honor; but the mean person, of whatever rank, is condemned." — "Man wants understanding more than wealth." [1]

His last message is a tender letter to his mother. Over his remains the sages moralize on the contrast of his glory with his dust; and then with the tribute that "Fortune has hidden him from human gaze, like treasures of silver and gold," consign him to his Alexandrian grave, "enveloped in the mercy and forgiveness of the Almighty, whose perfection endures while all things else decay." [2]

Quite as marvellous as this decree of natural change over which the Mussulman sages moralize in awe, is the contrast between the Alexander of history and these products of religious tradition, weaving ideals of successive ages around his name. While the pith and point in Plutarch's sayings of Alexander befit a master-mind that swayed men as it did nations, the commonplaces of the Mussulman ideal belong to a traditional moralist or a meditative saint. Probably no other character in history has afforded scope for a similar variety of construction. Such the universality of his function in history; such the significance for the future of the first appearance of personal supremacy, on a scale that matched the importance of that element in the evolution of humanity as a whole.

Such a Titanic force was not only accorded ideal rights by the voice of mankind, but strictly held to corresponding ideals of duty. And this moral criticism of one whose reported claim was that of being adored as an incarnate god is extremely creditable to the ages immediately succeeding him. Yet the fact is, that most of the crimes

[1] Shea's Translation (Oriental Fund Series), pp. 421–26. [2] Ibid., pp. 428–29.

recorded against him are such as grew inevitably out of the delirium of his success and the real or imaginary perils from friend and foe which the situation involved. The difficulty of reconciling his outbreaks of fury with the grandeur, or at least the breadth, of his purpose and the equity of his general conduct, is increased by the puzzling variety of testimony and explanation concerning them. And we hardly know whether to ascribe these outbreaks to an intense nervous susceptibility which drove him to the madness of rage in his grief over the natural death of one friend,[1] and made his hasty revenge on another produce a revulsion of conscience to the insanity of despair,[2] or to believe that none of these dark tragedies have been related in their true connection with events. Perhaps here, as often elsewhere, the wine-cup is deep and red enough to solve much of the mystery. But careful study of the biographies of Alexander confirms the old belief, that, however superior to vulgar conquerors, he was in many respects a slave of unregulated passions, and especially of an ambition for personal sway, which could efface for the moment every consideration of mercy, justice, or private affection that appeared to stand in its path. The splendid star of empire that beckoned him in his early youth, when he complained that Philip was leaving him no lands to conquer,[3] gathered more and more of earthly exhalations about it, which showed that it was not made to shine steadily in the heavenly ether. It is painful, as we follow his track, to see how his victories multiplied the sharp temptations of his lower instincts, — necessities of cruel wrong, monstrous delusions about the plans and motives of others, barbarous sacrifices of life (brutal indulgences), and the slaughter of friend after friend upon suspicion, or in the fury of intoxication. These were the

[1] *Death of Hephæstion* (Arrian), vii. 14. [2] *Death of Clitus* (Arrian), iv. 9.
[3] Plutarch: *Life of Alexander*.

dreadful fatalities of a battle waged not against kingdoms so much as against nature, against possibility, against all rivalry of gods or men. Even Arrian, a most lenient judge, and perhaps the most dispassionate of his biographers, does not pretend to know what he designed; but "undertakes to say that he would never have been satisfied with victories, but would have been roving after places more remote from human knowledge. If he could have found no other foe to encounter, his own mind would have kept him in a constant state of warfare."[1] This is, we repeat, the incarnation of that internecine strife of the Two Principles, which belonged to the Iranian conception of life and the universe. The terrible conditions of that world-development were, that for three thousand years Ahriman should be master, though the germs of Ormuzd's victory are struggling and shaping through the whole; so that the very deliverance of the world must be purchased by the costly sacrifice of the noblest part of men's natures to the worst. The representative of this process is the career of personal Will. Translated into the facts of history, it has no type so perfect as Alexander's towering ambition, and its tragic fates of good and evil. By its triumph should man be brought to the consciousness of his unity. But the master-will shall not come to its throne without the slaughter of the man's own best instincts in the terrible struggle with opposing wills that must be trodden under his feet. Such the plane on which the conflict moved, pointing beyond itself to higher planes; such the inevitable conditions, of which he who should play the rôle of conqueror must be the instrument, — subject none the less to moral forces, since our responsibility is forever proved real by what we are, and by what our condition brings. Neither Sophocles nor Shakspeare has fathomed the tragedy of personal character which is involved in every step

[1] *Expedition of Alexander*, vii. 1.

of human progress. Only the grandeur of the end can absorb the anguish with which we must contemplate the actual implications of every great historic function. And our judgment alike of the suffering and the shame is obliged to accept that personal equation which interprets both these elements by the conditions of the age and its work; its susceptibilities of pain and pleasure, good and ill; its alternatives of choice; its ideal hopes, which direct the currents of individual aim; and the infinite stress of its invisible forces, which must smooth their own most destructive track through the natures they have themselves prepared to be their instruments. Even contemporary history records only the striking facts, the patent results, and these inaccurately at best: their causes and conditions and their spiritual quality, in the minds of the actors, lie mainly beyond its ken. If a past age cannot give these elements for judging its own leaders, our later times must supply them in part, by discerning the extent to which those leaders were, as they largely must have been, representatives of the age, as we now comprehend it,—their characters and conduct the work of its hand.

In the case of Alexander, we have the most conspicuous instance in history of the representation in one man's life and destiny of the power of an age to shape its instrument to its own historic purpose. In him its constructive as well as its destructive energies found play. And in our respect for the criticism which he received through all the glamour of his success, we cannot forget that the very historical conditions which rendered such criticism possible were in part results of the stimulus given by him to moral forces of which he was no mere passive instrument, but to some extent a conscious and earnest producer. He who can effect the advance to an ethical standard higher than his own conditions allowed, and capable of bringing his own life into judgment, is, even on that

ground, an ideal factor in the ethical education of mankind. And while we willingly hear Juvenal and Lucian satirize his claim to divinity,[1] and the sophist Theocritus with keen wit tell his friends to "keep up their hearts, so long as they see the gods dying sooner than men;" while we respond to the somewhat rhetorical protest of Seneca, against the *eternum crimen*, the death of Callisthenes, as sufficient in his opinion to outweigh everything that could be said for "the first of generals and kings,"[2] — we must interline these and similar criticisms with the half-conscious testimony of their authors to the justice of even an Iranian hero-worship in his case. The supposed audacity of claiming the name and honor of a god is somewhat modified by the practical resemblance of most of the Greek gods to men; by the frequency of a supposed title to divine descent; and by the traditional habits of Oriental allegiance. Arrian says distinctly that the "adoration" given was "after the Persian manner." It was the Greek custom, as we know, for great families to claim descent from the gods; and Alexander had been taught to trace his own through three lines of demi-gods to Jupiter himself.[3] Lucian's Diogenes in Hades sneers at the "king of kings," — "So you too are dead like the rest of us!" but his own impartial Minos decides that Alexander is greater than Scipio or Hannibal, great as they are.[4] Juvenal and Seneca, writing from the abstract ethical standpoint, lose some of their force as soon as we reflect on the historical relations and conditions which they wholly leave out of sight. Arrian, whose version of Callisthenes' courageous rebuke of Alexander's pretensions to deity gives this philosopher the highest claim on our sympathy, nevertheless thinks he was justly odious to the king for his stiff and

[1] Satire, x. Dialogue, xix.
[2] *Quæstiones Naturales*, vi. 23. See Arrian, iv. 10, 11, 14.
[3] Arrian, iv. 10.
[4] Dialogue, xviii. xix.

sour ways, and that his own conduct greatly strengthened the suspicions to which he fell a victim.[1] Neither this nor any other acts of violence of which he allows his hero to have been guilty, prevented Arrian from affirming that in comparison with his great and laudable acts his vices were few and trifling; that he cannot but have been the special instrument of a divine care; that no one was ever comparable with him; that he was strictly observant of his own promises, vigilant to detect the treachery of others, and "as indifferent to the pleasures of the body, as he was insatiable in the desires of his mind."[2] Curtius, who charges Alexander with extreme injustice and cruelty towards Callisthenes, "for which he sought to make amends by a repentance which came too late,"[3] has, notwithstanding this, put upon his lips the most effective defences of his policy and conduct, and praises the noble qualities of his heart, — his constancy, clemency, good faith, and self-restraint in all pleasure, making only one exception, "an inexcusable passion for wine."[4] As to this affair of Callisthenes, it is to be remembered that Aristotle had warned his friend that his sharp tongue would probably bring him to an early death,[5] and that he had the name of being capable of making Alexander a god in his writings, and yet joking at his divinity among his friends.[6] The horrible cruelties said by some to have been inflicted on him are simply incredible and absurd. Lucan, in the effort to set off his own divinity, Julius Cæsar, calls the Macedonian "a conquering brigand;"[7] yet his Cæsar cares more for visiting this "brigand's" grave than for anything else in Alexandria; and his own Roman pride is mortified

[1] *Expedition of Alexander*, iv. 11, 12.
[2] Ibid., vii. 28, 29.
[3] *History of Alexander the Great*, viii. 8.
[4] Ibid., v. 7.
[5] Diogenes Laertius: *Life of Aristotle*.
[6] Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*. Arrian (iv. 8) admits that he was occasionally subject to this passion, to which he ascribes the killing of Clitus.
[7] Lucan: *Pharsalia*, bk. x.

by the confession that a single province of the "brigand's" empire is great enough to defy the imperial arms. Or what credit shall we accord to Curtius, when in the same breath with his praises of this hero of his romance for self-restraint in all pleasures but wine, he describes him as having kept three hundred and sixty concubines, and given himself up to debauchery among the courtesans of Persepolis?[1]

The Zoroastrian priesthood put Alexander in hell for burning the "Nosks" of the Zend-Avesta at Persepolis, pretending to account in that way for the supposed disappearance of their sacred volume till the time of the Sassanides, and charge the destruction of that splendid city, as does Curtius also, upon a drunken debauch, in which Alexander was incited to the act by the courtesan Thais.[2] But the best authorities agree that only the palace with its environs was burned, and this as a foolish act of requital for Xerxes' pillage of Athens;[3] and there are ample proofs that Persepolis was a flourishing city from the time of Alexander to the age of Julian.[4] Equally unhistorical is the story that the writings of Zoroaster were destroyed by Alexander, since the religious books of the Persians were used by Hermippus a century afterwards. They were in fact destroyed by Mahometan fanaticism nearly a thousand years after Alexander's time. It was contrary to his fixed policy and his natural instinct to treat native literatures and faiths otherwise than with respect. In spite of the *odium theologicum* of the Zoroastrians, ten Persian poets have sung the "Alexander-Saga."

It were well for the fame of the conqueror if the sack of Tyre and the enslavement of its population, the massacres and executions in India and Bactria, and above all the

[1] *History of Alexander the Great*, v. 7. [2] Ibid.

[3] Diodorus, xvii. 2. Arrian, iii 18. Plutarch: *Life of Alexander* (Strabo).

[4] Diodorus, xix. 22. 2 *Maccabees*, ix. 11. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, xxiii. 9. Arrian, vi. 30.

homicide of Clitus, the death-warrants of Philotas and Parmenio, could be disposed of as easily as the conflagration of the Persian capital. It is no part of our purpose to discuss the various and contradictory accounts of many of these apparent atrocities; the testimony is too strong to be dismissed, that here were deeds that would shame the noblest record. Some of the palliations that have been offered for them are not wanting in force,—such as the exasperation of obstinate conflict, and the extremity of personal peril,—though by far the strongest is the universal testimony that his violent acts were generally the result of sudden frenzy, and succeeded by equally violent remorse.[1] But if we abandon the disgraceful tradition that this son of the gods was in the habit of brawling with his friends over their cups, we are thrown back on the worse alternative that his paroxysms of rage had not even the excuse of drunkenness. Scandal-mongers, flatterers, false witnesses, ambitious companions, old national grudges (as against Persepolis and Tyre), plotters against his life,[2] the passions of his followers, the unbridled rage of his soldiery, the demands of turbulent Macedonian chiefs to judge and sentence suspected persons, the necessity of sharp and decisive blows in case of rebellion or treachery,—all must take their share of responsibility for these acts, and it is assuredly not a small one. But these associations were simply the natural *dramatis personæ* of the play. How could a man in any age of the world command divine honors to be paid not only to himself but to his friends, boasting that he was not only a god but could make gods,[3] without bringing such furies of temptation and torment as those around him in hosts? Arrian tells us he promised Cleomenes that if certain temples to Hephæstion in Egypt

[1] See especially Justin, xii. 6.

[2] Arrian tells us that a plot was really formed to kill Alexander, in which Philotas was concerned; and that it was discovered through Ptolemy. *Expedition of Alexander*, iv. 13.

[3] Lucian.

were built strictly according to his orders, he would forgive all the crimes that officer might afterwards commit. "To give such license to a man of cruel disposition," adds the historian, "admits of no excuse."[1] One fact remains, after all has been said, — Alexander was the spoiled child of success. The confusion of his biographers as to his character arises from the fact that his character changed, and at every phase made such powerful assertion of itself that every phase seemed equally valid. It has been allowed by all, that contact with Asiatic taste and colossal temptations gradually corrupted the simplicity of his Greek nature.[2] The treachery of friends and officials, too, destroyed his faith in others. After such experiences, "he became more and more ready to give credit to accusations, and inflict severest punishments on slightest offenders, on suspicion of plots."[3]

Here on the soil of Iran the worship of personal Will rose to its absolute idea by the very nature of men and things, and the human master could not stop short of pronouncing himself a god. We cannot but think that this later consummation of his life has been transferred to its beginning, in fastening such precocious egotisms upon his youth as the saying that "heaven could not suffer two suns, nor earth two masters;"[4] or the complaint that "out of the infinite number of worlds, he could not be master of one."[5] This would be preternatural in the boy-prince of a petty kingdom; but it can hardly be called audacity in one who had actually swept the civilized world with his conquering sword.

It would seem that the laws of human progress were responsible for the Oriental worship of Alexander. Nature had produced a man-child fit for that personal ideal

[1] *Expedition of Alexander*, vii. 23.
[2] Sainte-Croix: *Examen des anciens historiens d'Alexandre-le-Grand*, p. 376.
[3] Arrian, vii. 41.
[4] Diodorus, xvii. 54.
[5] Plutarch: *De Tranquillitate Animi*, iv.

through which alone man could advance to a world-civilization. The tribes must have been less or more than human not to have adored Alexander. A century before his accession Macedonia was scarcely a State; its petty princedoms were in feudal strife; its few towns were held by southern Greeks; its kings were regarded as barbarous chiefs, though claiming to be of Argive descent. At the death of Philip it had mastered Greece by policy and war; and Greek culture had penetrated it, in spite of more than one threatened return to barbarism. Yet it seemed on the point of disintegration. Alexander succeeded to a throne whose occupancy was usually determined by assassination. He inherited an empty treasury, royal domains mortgaged for a heavy debt, and the charge of a mother whose extravagance was only equalled by the evil fame which threw suspicion on the legitimacy of her son. His early habits of frugality could have had no worse impediment than her pampering hands. The mountain tribes were preparing to revolt. Subject Greece was discontented, Sparta hostile, Athens intriguing with Persia to seize the moment of a change of kings "to check and depress the rising kingdom." But Alexander proved his descent from Jove. He instantly passed every barrier, mastered Pan-Hellenes and Amphictyons, received from both councils higher honors than his father had; and, aided by a sagacity in choice of counsellors as great as his energy in the field, at once created an impression of majesty that made his visible presence needless, and allowed him to turn with all his resources to the punishment of the Persian King.

And these resources were all original. His Asiatic victories were not won by veteran Greeks.[1] Scarce one of his generals was of the old Greek stock; they were Macedonians, as was the mass of his army. The tactics and the battle-order of Alexander were, like everything he effected,

[1] Arrian: *Indica*, cap. xviii.

revolutions on the traditional method. He made the old phalanx mobile, armed it with the long spear, and, while drawing forth its utmost capacities, supplied its defects with corps of light infantry and cavalry trained to manœuvre on any ground, and to match the dash of their leader in scouring the deserts and surprising armies and towns. Before the masterly combinations of this earlier Napoleon, no Asiatic army, however immense, could stand. And every resistless line of steel moved, after all, within his single heart and brain. It was these that made void every obstacle, — the jealous chiefs and turbulent soldiery; the Bactrian snows and mountain passes; the terrible heats, droughts, and famines of the Gedrosian coast; the numerous satraps, watching for chances to start rebellions and set up governments for themselves; the vast populations of ancient cities and countries. Amidst it all, this band of conquerors moved like some volcanic wave, confident as though on their own soil. It is impossible to mistake the source of their inspiration; nothing like it has been seen, perhaps, in military history. Exposing himself to the extreme of peril, wounded again and again, directing every detail of personal government, and, in spite of all occasional excesses, choosing always the short path to victory, and combining the elements of every situation with far-sighted policy to the accomplishment of a purpose that grew vaster with every step, — to all human conception, in that day, Alexander verily acted the god. When his life was despaired of, the panic of the little army, so audacious in his strength, was equalled only by its grief; and when, as if by miracle, he was preserved again and again, it seemed to their delirious joy that Earth and Heaven waited on his will.[1] The march back to the Phœnician coast-cities, and the slow siege of Tyre were not the waste of time and strength they seemed;[2] they gave him that command of the sea

[1] Arrian, vi. 13. [2] Ibid., ii. 17.

without which he was lost. Striking at once at the great cities, as if devoid of prudence, he really gained the fame of a deliverer and the greater prestige of centralized power.

Lavish to his soldiers, often magnanimous to his foes; considerate of differences that called for distinctions in treatment of persons; master of the arts of pleasing and rewarding,[1] — Alexander knew how to unite the paternal spirit of the great Cyrus with a serene assumption of rightful ownership in all Asia, which seemed to make doubt of the claim a crime. It is related that he at first forbade his soldiers to plunder the conquered nations, because these were their own countrymen; and the story at least perfectly illustrates his attitude, which was the most effective possible, even in a strategic point of view. His management of the Greek States during the Asiatic campaigns was masterly; on the one hand, losing no opportunity of winning their gratitude by restoring their exiles, releasing their envoys to Darius after Issus, liberating and honoring their Ionian cities, sending trophies to their temples, paying devotion to their traditional gods and heroes everywhere, and specially encouraging the democratic spirit, as in his present to Athens of the statues of the patriot tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton; while, on the other hand, keeping in custody the Spartan agents at the Persian Court (the Greeks who had entered Persian service after the league between Greece and Macedon) as hostages for the fidelity of their countrymen at home.[2] He discerned that the part of pacificator among nations and races was at once the true function of a hero, and the only path to universal empire. And this double motive explains his assumption of Oriental forms and manners; his amalgamation of Greeks and Asiatics; his training hosts of Asiatic youths (*Epigoni*) in Greek disciplines;[3] his per-

[1] Arrian, i. 18, 19; iii. 24, 27; iv. 21.

[2] Ibid., ii. 15; i. 30; iii. 24.

[3] Ibid., vii. 6.

sistent refusal to gratify his Macedonians to the sacrifice of the conquered tribes and chiefs; and the energy with which he suppressed their discontents on this score, especially at Opis, crowning his success with a grand Feast of Reconciliation, celebrated with religious rites and joyful games.[1]

Conquest develops a "Scamp Jupiter" out of an Apollo; but we cannot refuse Alexander the credit of having recognized something of the function which his conquests were to fulfil in human history. He was no vulgar marauder. His tastes were for the society of scholars, the books and the men whom all ages revere. He had thought and studied, and knew what his own age had to teach and to transmit. In the uncertainty resting on all individual statements about him, it is of great significance that on this point all testimonies agree. "Puer acerrimis literarum studiis eruditus," says Justin. Pliny makes him the centre of art and artists, and supplies one of the finest symbols in the history of literature when he pictures him putting the poems of Homer in the costliest casket he could find among his Persian spoils.[2] We are told that he often cited verses of Euripides, sometimes large portions of his dramas at once; that he enjoyed Pindar's lyrics, and chose Achilles among the heroes of the Iliad, as was natural enough. "He invaded Persia," says Plutarch, "with greater assistance from Aristotle than from Philip."[3] And if we go over the ethical and political ideas of the Stagirite, we shall find that the statement is not without confirmation in much of Alexander's history.[4]

[1] Arrian, vii. 11. Diodorus Siculus.

[2] Pliny: *Natural History*, vii. 30.

[3] "That Aristotle accompanied Alexander, or that plants and animals were sent to him for examination from distant districts, is mere talk. Aristotle confined himself to the knowledge of his own day, and was convinced that this was all that was of real importance to solve all the principal problems."— Lange: *History of Materialism*, i. 83. *Westminster Review*, July, 1881.

[4] *Politics*, v. 11; vi. 8; iii. 15, 16, 17; i. 2, 4. *Ethics*, viii. 10, 11; ii. 7; iv. 1; x. 7.

The clear distinctions between a tyrant and a king; the assertion of moral responsibility in king and people alike, of limits to monarchical power, of the right of all men to be well governed; the wise praises of moderation, and warnings against enslavement to passion; the democratic bias, marred though it is by the advocacy of slavery as an appointment of Nature; above all, the praise of intellect and of living for the best idea, — these elements of the Aristotelian doctrine may well have had their influence in producing many of the noble purposes and acts recorded of Alexander in the earlier part of his career. Intellectually an apt pupil, in instincts of liberty and breadth of human interest he probably was far beyond his master. Of Alexander no praise seems to have been thought extravagant. To a poet who did not meet appreciation one said, "Hadst thou lived when Alexander lived, for every verse he would have given thee an island or a territory." His person was the despair of artists, till one said, "I will compass it; I will shape Mount Athos into Alexander's likeness, with feet reaching to the seas, with a fair city in his left hand, and his right pouring as constant drink a great river into the waves." But Alexander said, "Let Athos alone; it is already a monument of vanquished vanity. Our portrait the snowy Caucasus, the towering Emodon, the Tanais, and the Caspian shall draw."[1] "He was happier than other conquerors," writes Pausanias, "in that his felicity was least of all assisted by treachery."[2] The tribute of the historian of Egypt, that we trace his conquering march in that country, "not by ruin, misery, and anarchy, but by the building of cities, the administration of justice, the growth of leaning,"[3] is, notwithstanding the exceptions we have mentioned, in great degree true of his whole career.

[1] Plutarch: *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander.*

[2] *Itinerary; or Description of Greece*, vii. 10.

[3] Sharpe: *Egypt* (English edition, 1846), p. 116.

And here is the point of reconciliation between the man and the instrument; between what he was and what was done through him. Such points of contact there must always be, or the continuity of historic cause and effect would be broken. Sainte-Croix, whose studies of the biographers of Alexander are more valuable for comparison of evidences as to facts than for criticism of motives or opinions, makes light of the idea that he was moved by any universal ideas or noble purposes whatever: [1] nothing but one man's unscrupulous ambition conquered the world. It is impossible to believe that the unquestionably direct effects of this all-embracing mastership are traceable to a personal cause so ignoble. To refute it, we need not rely on his reputation with every biographer for occasional acts or constant habits of heroism; on his sparing the tombs of patriot-dead at Thebes, his sending prisoners and exiles to their homes, his generosity to the family of Darius, his courteous and honorable treatment of noble women committed to his care, his agony at the death of his friends, his remorse for his own excesses.[2] There are stories by the best authorities that show him watching all night in cold and peril beside his old preceptor, who had fallen exhausted in the wilds of Anti-Libanus, and by personal attack on a hostile camp securing the means of preserving his life; pouring away the water sent him by his thirsty soldiers in a terrible drought, saying, "If I alone drink, these good men will be dispirited;" [3] drinking a potion before the face of the physician who had prepared it, after having shown him a letter in which he was charged with intent to poison; [4] telling a queen who had addressed his friend Hephæstion as the king, that she was right, "for this man also is Alexander;" persisting in disbelief of

[1] *Examen des anciens historiens d'Alexandre-le-Grand.*
[2] Pausanias: *Bœotica*, xli. Quintus Curtius, v. 5.
[3] Plutarch: *Life of Alexander.*
[4] Arrian, ii 4.

treachery in Harpalus till compelled to admit it, with a shock that told bitterly on his faith in men. Plutarch ventures to report as from him such rare sayings as these: "There is something noble in hearing oneself ill-spoken of, when one is doing well;" "God is the common father of men, but specially of the good."

Nothing can deprive Alexander of the glory of having aimed with enthusiasm, if not with constancy, at uniting mankind in following out the possibilities of progress in that wonderful age. In this form of imperial influence he instinctively led the way, in his passion for the ideal State throwing aside the social distinctions founded by Aristotle on slow inductions from the past. We may well believe the tradition that in making Greek and Barbarian equal before the law, he acted against the philosopher's specific counsel.[1] A striking illustration of this policy was his permitting his opponents in Greece to abide by the decision of the Amphictyons, instead of having them sent to Macedon for trial.[2] He won the hearts of the Egyptians by granting independent government by native rulers, and in accordance with national customs and laws; and charmed their priesthood by offering worship in the temple of the national god, as his son, after the manner of the ancient kings.[3] He in fact sought to accomplish in the political world what Aristotle pursued in the scientific only. How much finer than Napoleon's reconstruction of the map of Europe in his own dynastic interests, under the name of popular rights, was Alexander's establishment, at every commanding point in Egypt and Asia, of cities that should be nurseries in Greek culture for States remanded to native rulers and under free governments! Here the splendid intellectual and political genius of Hellas mingled with Oriental passion and imagination, to

[1] Plutarch: *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, i. 6.
[2] Pausanias, vii. 10.
[3] Sharpe: *Egyptian Inscriptions*.

initiate the best elements of modern science and faith,[1] and especially the all-creative sense of *unity* and *universality*, whose far-brought germs have grown to maturity only in our day. The Neoplatonic and Jewish elements, combined in Alexandria to give early Christianity its power of expansion and adaptability to the demands of thought, and to free it from its original narrowness of scope, were brought together by this mighty centralizing force. Perhaps no point in the history of that transition has greater interest than the profound connection of the Alexandrian philosophy with Oriental conceptions of monarchy, as seen in the imperialism of its First Principle, — an essence lying behind all human experience, above all conceivable processes of life, and uniting Greek science with a mediatorial conception of ascending grades and orders of function towards the unapproachable One.[2] This speculative idea the growth of Alexander's empire had made the palpable suggestion of experience. On a quite different track the influence of these conquests was almost equally important. Absorbing all political ambitions in centralized forces, personal and organic, they left freer play for private and domestic interests, and led to a greater recognition of them in literature.[3] The New Comedy, one of the most fruitful sources of the study of human nature and social elements in all history, arose after Alexander had brought the exciting conflicts of races and States into quiet, so far at least as the above suggestion of unity and order in the political sphere could be so called; and this not only without destroying freedom of speech and of study, but by greatly encouraging it.[4]

But Alexander did not merely found cities, whose free cultures were germs of future civilization; he personally provided such cities with men who proved competent to

[1] See Zeller's *Stoics*, p. 15 (English edition). [2] Ibid., p. 34.
[3] Ibid., p. 18. [4] Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*, pp. 389, 434.

build institutions that were themselves civilizations, — the Museum of Alexandria and the Lyceum of Athens. The weight of his name protected the free thought of Aristotle at the Lyceum; for the great teacher was condemned for blasphemy immediately after Alexander's death.[1] The immense pecuniary aid and the thousands of collaborators, which Pliny reports him to have given Aristotle for the collection of scientific material, may be an exaggeration, especially as his physical works show slight acquaintance with Asiatic plants and animals, and were probably written, in part at least, before Alexander's campaigns; but the story is true so far as this, — that the Indian campaign, especially, was the source of a flood of writings on physical geography and natural history.[2] At his touch, harvests of historians, scholars, naturalists, moralists, and generals sprang up on Iranian soil. Ptolemy Soter, the regenerator of Egypt, one of the greatest of sovereigns, whose glory consisted in carrying out Alexander's system of freedom, mildness, and equity, and his love of philosophy and letters, was his intimate friend, and perhaps a near relative. A scholar, as well as statesman, he wrote his biography, and was in every sense his best successor; not least so in this, that, in conjunction with Demetrius Phalereus, he planned and instituted the Museum of Alexandria, and made it the intellectual centre of the age.

As the opener of the East to free government and scientific study, Alexander might well arouse the enthusiasm of his contemporaries; and not less as the pioneer of letters, preparing the way for Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Plato, and Aristotle. But there is a splendor of prophecy not to be described, in the influences that flowed back from this Iranian throne upon the Western world.

[1] Gillies, p. 24.

[2] See Blainville: *Histoire des Sciences de l'Organisation*, i. 305.

Arabia, India, Persia, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, were the Œcumenical Council to initiate these influences, centring in the purpose of this human Jove and the grander purpose that wrought at once beyond and through his will. Asia was not the mere corrupter of Greece, her Oriental siren of luxury and slavery. By his radiant march through Iran, and by the voyage of his admiral through the Indian seas, — which he proposed to follow up by opening the Euphrates and Persian Gulf, if not by circumnavigating Arabia, and exploring the Euxine, — what an empire of new knowledge, geographical, physical, ethnological, stimulated every human faculty, and impelled to inductive generalization as the only way of dealing with the materials! The spaces of Nature were doubled, and her borders set forward from the Zagros Mountains to the heart of India and the Scythian wilds of the North. Science became encyclopedic, a seeker of classes and wholes. Diodorus, Eratosthenes, Strabo, Pliny, and Ptolemy, became possible. It reached eastward, and the distant Ceylon was found to be an island only.[1] It began to conjecture inhabited lands in the Western sea that might complete the circuit of the globe, to strike out universal laws, to separate truth from mythology; and a wondrous series of cosmical discoveries ensued.[2] The commerce opened between Alexandria and India, and the embassies of the Seleucidæ, brought Greek astronomy into the Hindu schools, themselves already flourishing.[3] Greek terms abounded; obligations to Greek teachers are confessed; and the achievements of those apt scholars became in turn the sources of astronomical knowledge to the Arabs of Bagdad, by whom ancient science was passed down to modern times. Still fertile in errors, as was natural in this fresh expansion of its realm, the imagination received

[1] Pliny: *Natural History*, vi. 24.

[2] Humboldt: *Cosmos*, ii. 147.

[3] Weber: *History of Indian Literature*, p. 251.

from the vast prospect of colossal mountains, varied climates, products, races, religions, which this man's eagle eye traced out, an impulse unexampled in history. At the same moment serious and free criticism began in the necessity of testing traditional beliefs by comparison with the new treasures brought by the higher authority of fact. In his striking description of certain aspects of these conquests in relation to the study of the physical world, Humboldt mentions the immense step taken, mainly through Aristotle, in "the formation of a *scientific language*."[1]

Most impressive of all the results of the Macedonian conquests, and the spirit in which they were pursued, was the inevitable suggestion of a universal citizenship in the great republic of Humanity, whose common interests no natural barriers could longer hide. The sublime outlook of Stoicism; its city of God; its brotherhood of nations; its absolute trust in natural order; its regeneration of Roman law by humanity and justice; its correction of Christian other-worldliness by acceptance of human destiny, flowed directly from the bivouacs of this great soldier on the Iranian plains.[2]

It does not belong to the plan of our work to enter into the development of the historic causes and effects, which are here affirmed only as bearing on our more extended theme, of which they form but a section. Enough has been said to show that the rapidity of these changes was a flash of Iranian fire. It demonstrated also that Alexander was the swift-moving focus of vast tendencies, of which his age was the natural climate and soil. His campaigns were over in

[1] *Cosmos*, ii. 149-165 (English edition).

[2] No one has more strikingly recognized these tendencies in the very necessities of historic cause and effect than Merivale in his little work, "The Conversion of the Roman Empire." Yet he has greatly marred the value of his testimony by depreciating these tendencies of Nature in view of a supposed supernatural transformation of them in the person of Jesus Christ. Nor does he, as it seems to me, appreciate Alexander's conscious purpose in this unifying work. Lecture iii.

"Nearly all the most important Stoics before the Christian era belong by birth to Asia Minor, to Syria, and to the islands of the Eastern Archipelago."— Zeller's *Stoics*, p. 37.

twelve years. And fifty years after his death, the city he founded and laid out in the shape of his Macedonian cloak, and made the representative of his purposes and his name, was the open gate of intellect, commerce, and faith, to a new cycle of human growth.

There is no evidence to confirm the tradition that he died by poison;[1] but much reason to believe that Arrian is right in saying that he foresaw that his successors would perform his obsequies in blood.[2] The magnificent funeral car moved across the continents from Babylon to Egypt, bearing the dead form of the master of civilizations to his rest beside the sacred Nile;[3] around it hovered the awe of myriads, who believed, so says the tradition, that he still wore the hue of life, still sat crowned and on his golden throne, and was sure to smite to earth the impious one who should dare to touch his Majesty. For nearly a thousand years the cultus of his divinity survived in Egypt. Yet no picture or statue remains.[4] Other gods came, whose disciples could endure no rival names. The pictures of Augustus were put by Claudius in place of those of Alexander. We shall not see that majestic statue, by Lysippus, which was said to have made men tremble.[5] The Christians of Alexandria destroyed his tomb. But how slight is what men can do to build or destroy a name, compared with the work of ideas and principles that have ages for their servants and history for their fruits!

The ages of exclusiveness, national and religious, were passing away. The communion of races made inevitable a new historic birth. In Antioch and Alexandria and Rome, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, Barbarian and Greek, were now to know themselves as children of common relations, reaching beyond the borders of nations, continents, oceans, mountains, and deserts that had seemed

[1] See Arrian, vii. 27.
[2] Ibid., vii. 26.
[3] Diodorus Siculus.
[4] Sainte-Croix, p. 506.
[5] Plutarch. See Sainte-Croix, p. 499

the limits of the world. Nature, humanity, unity, brotherhood, were syllables shaping on the winds, blow they whence they would. Later Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were to find their way prepared; the universal elements were ready to bear these religious harvests, and law and science and philosophy and all secular culture were assured. Three hundred years had passed since Cyrus turned the waters of the river of Babylon, when Alexander left an empire to his successors, which added to the Persian those worlds of intellectual promise, — Egypt and Greece.

Now again a mighty force of personal Will gathers and directs the currents of progress through the ideal prestige it can command. Other like forms of personal worship follow; for this was the condition of progress that opened with the mind of Iran. But all were involved in what had already been done. The veil that had hid the tribes of the earth from each other had already been rent; and the light shone, east and west, over the whole heavens of mind.

III.

THE SASSANIAN EMPIRE.

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WHAT would have been the destiny of the Persian empire had Alexander lived to complete his plans for making Babylon the organic centre of a new civilization, and transmitting his magnificent prestige in this permanent form, may be partially conjectured. His Oriental sympathies, his constructive capacity, and that of the remarkable group of thinkers and workers whom he had gathered around him; the vast antiquity of Asiatic traditions, and their common allegiance to this focus of cultures; the commercial advantages of the Euphrates valley, and the long-established lines of communication which gave Babylon a commanding voice through the ancient world, — would doubtless have preserved the continuity of the Persian State, and concentrated upon that historic region much of the intellectual and political significance which after the decline of Greece fell to the lot of Alexandria and Rome. Hellenic wisdom, forsaking the ruined republics, and gathering on its eastward track the splendid relics of Ionian culture, would have brought thither its best philosophy and science to mingle with the moral ardor and sensuous idealism of Mazdean worship. The tribes of the East and the West would have gone up to Alexander's Babylon with that Iranian passion for heroic personality, common to Persian and Greek, which would have united their jealous individualities and sunk their feudal independence in the pride of universal empire. Whether the corresponding demand for religious unity, which was the all-controlling impulse of the centuries succeeding Alexander, resulting in Neoplatonism

and Christianity, would not, under these conditions, have found its centre in an Aryan rather than a Semitic faith, and drawn its symbolism from the associations of Iran rather than from those of Palestine and Arabia, is a question not to be lightly answered in the negative. So plastic are special religions to the forces of evolution, and so interwoven and mutually dependent did they become as a result of the period to which we now refer, that the natural selection of one or another of them as a basis for the continuities of man's spiritual progress depended very much on such external elements as geographical location and the set of social and political currents. Science will not trace this selection, so far as it existed, to any extreme difference in their spiritual quality or even in their doctrinal form; while it overwhelmingly disproves the claim of any one race or religion to have been the sovereign factor of the highest elements of our civilization.

The Dualism of Mazdeism, its internecine war of God and Satan, its intolerance of infidel and hostile wills in the name of purity, its energy of ethical motive and its enthusiasm for personal heroism, as well as its devotion to one Supreme Person combining the powers of creation, preservation, and destruction, were all directly in the same line of religious development. Judaism and Christianity were, each in its way, equally dualistic. The good and evil creations were arrayed against each other in the prophecies of Isaiah and the Gospel of John as truly as in the Avesta of Zoroaster. The monarchical God of Europe could have been evolved from Ahuramazda, or the All-wise and All-mighty, as well as from Jahveh, Allah, or the Abba Father of Christianity. Doubtless the form in which the want of the Iranian world in Alexander's time for such a monarchical Will revealed in some visible or human way for the world's deliverance would have been met, would have differed from that in which Christianity met the same

demand three centuries later in the little province of the Roman State. But we may say, with equal truth, that the revival of the great Oriental monarchy by Alexander might well have wrought changes in all Asia to the borders of the Great Sea, and in the relation of those States to European history, which would have foreclosed the Messianic tragedy preparing in the social, political, and religious life of the Jewish people. Imagine the passionate monotheism of those patriotic tribes put under the fostering care of a new Cyrus and the spiritual providence of an idol-hating Ahura, instead of battling for its rites, traditions, and holy places against the polytheism of Greece and Rome. Imagine the faith of Ahuramazda broadened by the confluence of civilizations, and the development of Messianic Judaism drawn by his imperial sway out of its exclusive nationality, and made impersonal by prospects of moral and spiritual renovation for mankind, apart from the house of David and from visions of the end of this world, — and it is easy to see how changed would have been the historical relations and associations of modern civilization, so that their lines would have run back to quite other religious names and symbols of belief. There was nothing in the Iranian deity which made such world-influence impossible, and much that made it very probable, in connection with the wonderful old city where Jahveh himself was imbued with the larger life that was to come of his loins. All Asia, from the Hindu Koh to the river of Babylon, had submitted to the heroic personality of Alexander, and might have found in the religious traditions of the empire a basis for those cosmopolitan instincts which had long been working in the common relations of the tribes to an earthly "king of kings." A monarchical religion was desired that should fully recognize the great ethical conflict of good and evil, and be reconcilable with the liberty of States, of chiefs, of tribes,

of traditions; a god commanding by his ideal purity and energy the devotion of races that worshipped heroic Will, and believed in building a kingdom of heaven out of the resources of this world. Behind all dualistic mythology, magism, ritualism, spirit of conquest and sway, this was the essence of the Mazdean faith, upon which in large degree Alexander would have been forced to build his empire. What he might have effected in associating it with all future development, by union with the culture of Greece, and the communion of races and beliefs, in the city that had passed from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus, from Bel to Ahuramazda, and opened her gates to the humanities of Homer and the wisdom of Aristotle, is therefore on the whole not to be determined from a merely Semitic or even Christian point of view.

But Alexander's purposes died with his last breath; and the Macedonian princes who divided the yet unorganized empire neither cherished those purposes nor were capable of fulfilling them. Iranian religion, therefore, lost its distinguishable hold on the course of history, though not its real influence, as will hereafter appear. The river of Mazdeism runs mainly underground for five hundred years, and is hardly heard of till the day when the Sassanian Ardeshîr summoned it again to the throne of the East. But was a revival so wonderful ever known, before or since?

A more complete disappearance than that of the ancient faith of Iran during the reigns of the Macedonian and Parthian kings can hardly be imagined. The national legend takes no account of this period. Firdûsî merely says that after Iskander "light, turbulent, and bold princes seized on the divided empire, and were called kings of the tribes;" then passes directly to the birth of Ardeshîr, whose origin he traces to Sâsân, a scion of the native royal family, the ancestor of a tribe of shepherds, poor and straggling. Brought up by Bâbek, king at Istakhar, this descendant

of Isfendiyâr reopens the heroic and patriotic myth. Of the Seleucide period, history has preserved little but a wild phantasmagoria of shifting boundaries and fortunes, presented by the struggles of half-a-dozen princes for the mastery of a dissevered empire. Of the condition of the Iranian population under Seleucus Nicator, the greatest of these princes, whose dominions were almost conterminous with the old Persian empire, we know nothing. The Persian chroniclers may well ignore this whole Seleucide period and that of the Arsacidæ which succeeded it. The Greek colonists took no interest in Mazdeism, though all their native writers testify to the great influence which Oriental astrology (or asteroscopy), under the name of Magism, was exerting on the Hellenic mind. Notices of Persian Dualism in the writings of Theopompus and Plutarch,[1] of Pliny[2] and the Alexandrians, and the increasing tendency of all the Greeks to refer the beginning of their philosophic culture and the wisdom of their thinkers, old and new, to Zoroaster and his Magi, testify[3] to the profound interest created not only by the companions of Alexander, but by the whole intercourse of the East and West after the fall of the Persian empire, in a religion which was really of their own brain and blood, but more suggestive than their own of vast and subtile forces awaiting the touch of the understanding and the will. But great as was the world-historical interest of this period for the Mazdean faith, it depended, like the expansion of every other religion, upon failure and death on its own native soil, upon the transmission of its life into new forms and symbols, and the reaping of its harvests by other hands. The Macedonian strangers in Iran had little interest in the ethical earnestness of the Avesta,

[1] Plutarch: *Isis and Osiris.* [2] Pliny: *Natural History*, xxx.

[3] For a full account of these testimonies, see Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xix. 1–89).

and were doubtless of a more easy tolerance towards other forms of faith. The religion of the Parthians, who soon succeeded them, was a cultus of the elements, of the Turano-Scythic sort. Their worship of ancestors, of guardian genii, and of the heavenly bodies was somewhat advanced by a mixture of certain Mazdean names and associations, but had little regard for others, since they raised temples and statues to Mithra, and carried images of their gods about as teraphim.[1] It was said of them by the Armenian writers, that they let the fire of Ormuzd go out; and their priesthood may have been like those Median Magi who conspired against Cambyses, and sought to supplant the priests (*Âthravanô*) of Ahura. But they were certainly far from the intolerance of either party in that earlier war. The ease with which Ardeshîr accomplished the restoration of Mazdeism after four hundred years of Parthian rule, his immediate success in gathering a host of Mobads (eighty thousand, it is said) from all parts of the empire for this purpose, proves the full liberty of the old faith to maintain itself among the people through the reign of this foreign dynasty, and that it was in fact the popular religion of their dominions.

These Mobads, or Magi, whose name is never mentioned in the old Avesta where the priests are Âthravas, must have been either the representatives of the old Avestan priesthood, rising all at once from a state of semi-repression under the warlike Parthian tribes,[2] or else the Medo-Turanian priesthood must have been so modified by contact with Mazdeism as to be readily transformed into revivalists of Ahura at the summons of his apostle. The power of these Magi over the people, or as a social element, must have been maintained at its height during this whole period, since the revolution of Ardeshîr was evidently

[1] Justin, xli. 3. Josephus: *Jewish Antiquities*, xviii. 5, 9.
[2] Gibbon: *Roman Empire*, chap. viii.

an uprising of the Persian masses in the name of Ahura; and their representatives, the Mobads, were assigned the foremost place in the new order of things, and became the functionaries of a compulsory State religion. They collected and restored the old Avesta, and translated it from their original ancient Bactrian into the Pehlevî, or current language of the (Parthian) empire. It is not easy to see how the Mazdean faith could have survived in western Iran without the aid of its sacred books; yet if the old Bactrian had been comprehended by the people, why was it necessary to translate them into Pehlevî? There is no way of accounting for the facts, but to suppose that there were other methods of transmitting the doctrine and rites in the absence of original records, — such as oral traditions, fragmentary collections of hymns and precepts, embodying the substance of the faith, immemorial forms interwoven with social and domestic life, and including all, the undying love of a people for beliefs that were the natural outcome of their inward life. Here was a force of resistance capable of preventing any foreign influence from doing more than to overlay this natural religion with new details without altering its spirit, though the language of its records had become obsolete. The later portions of the Avesta, with their elaborate ritualism, are sufficient evidence of such foreign accessions and changes during the period preceding Ardeshîr, which the presence of the old Gâthâs at least would have foreclosed. The heroic national legends, as collected by Firdûsî as late as the Mahometan period, show how much of the oldest mythology of the faith is still traceable in strong outline through the whelming vicissitudes of thirteen centuries.

Such was the hold of the law of Ahuramazda upon the people of Iran through these five hundred years of foreign dominion. If the "fire" of that deity "had become extinct," it was not because the Parthian had directly

supplanted it by other fires, though he had lost his sacred regard for it sufficiently to burn the dead even,[1] but because the rule of a tribe of Turanian nomads, living on horseback, and devoted to aggressive warfare, had discouraged those national and personal traditions on whose authority it had come to rest, and by whose exclusiveness it had been fed. The revolution proved that the religious conscience of the Mazdeans had not been suppressed. Had it even been outraged? To the honor of their Scythic origin,[2] the Parthians were tolerant of all fires of faith. The Jews grew strong enough in Babylon and Nisibis, under their eyes, to rebel against them.[3] Jahveh, Ormuzd, Christ, even Bel and Buddha, dwelt side by side with the Parthian Mithra, and the worship of teraphim with that of the sun and moon. In Osrhoëne, Christianity was a State religion. Edessa was a fountain of Christian learning. The Parthian in Persia knew no difference of Greek and Jew. His coins bore Greek legends and Greek gods. At no other time or place in their history did the Jews live in greater authority and luxury than in his shadow. In his reign the materials for the Babylonian Talmud were gathered in quiet research. Everywhere in the empire sects competed and missionaries proselyted without offence. In Harran the Sabeans served many gods, and struck a root which held till the tenth century. If, as has been thought,[4] the Parthians sought to make every householder a priest, and thus to discourage special priesthoods, this very liberalism may have offended the Mazdeans. But the coins of the empire at that very time bore fire-altars, and the priests of Ahura were ready for the call of Ardeshîr.[5] The very names of these Parthian kings were mostly old Persian.[6]

[1] Herodian, iv. 30.
[2] Strabo, Justin, Arian, Gibbon, Niebuhr.
[3] Josephus: *Bell. Jud.* i. 11, *et seq.*
[4] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses.*
[5] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 6, 7.
[6] Roth (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xiii. 415, 416).

It is probable that, as the Parthian kings dropped the Scythian cap for the tall tiara of the Persians, so they accepted the Magism of their subjects as they found it, and allowed it considerable influence, — since the numbers of the priesthood in their time were very great, their possessions large, and they exercised a check on the royal autocracy.[1] The Parthians, though they had no art of any value, were by no means uncivilized, and became apt pupils of the Persian and the Greek. Mithridates turned upon the Scythic hordes, from whose bosom his line had come, and drove them from Iran. The race had large sympathies, and, like the Macedonians, sought unity on the basis of a religious freedom more liberal than Rome. They preserved, in this respect, the traditions of Alexander's policy, as well as foreshadowed the larger unities of modern times. It is, then, impossible that they should have dreamed of extinguishing the fires of Ahuramazda; but it is equally impossible that this very latitudinarianism should not have offended the rooted pride of Mazdeism, mortified its zeal, and provoked its jealousy; especially as its confessors were allowed too much freedom to become disheartened about their future destiny.

The energy of the revival, and its intense intolerance, were precisely what was to be expected from a religion absorbed in the worship of a supreme Divine Will. The old strength of Agni and Indra was in this flame that leaped from its fallen altars, where it had smouldered for five hundred years, and soared to its native heaven of absolute sway. What changes the faith had undergone during this long period, it is as yet difficult exactly to determine. But the Pehlevî literature of the Sassanians shows a large intermixture at least of Semitic beliefs,[2] with which, in the above respect, it could readily affiliate.

[1] Rawlinson: *Sixth Oriental Monarchy.*

[2] See Spiegel: *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, iii.

The interference of the Parthian kings with Iranian political institutions was equally unimportant. The Parthian rebellion was the work of nobles, discontented at the loss of personal liberties under the Seleucide rule; and their success brought personal rights to the front to such a degree that royalty itself was but a part of the nobility.[1] In respect to the powers of local chiefs, the Perso-Parthian State might be called Iranian. Originally a free tribe,—free from the time of Cyrus down, now allied to Alexander, and now arrayed against him,—the Parthians were swift to revolt from Hellenic satraps (250 B.C.) in the true spirit of old Iran. Their real sway over the empire began with Mithridates I. (163 B.C.), a conqueror worthy to be compared with Cyrus and Alexander, and was conducted on principles familiar to the native tribes. High-spirited nobles—a part of them Magi, and holding priestly office—elected the kings (called *Θεοὶ*, and brothers of the Sun and Moon), and tempered despotism by their independence.[2] The provinces were viceroyalties, and the social constitution, like the old Persian, was on a feudal basis,—each State retaining, in most respects, its local forms of government. The numerous cities founded by Alexander's Greek colonists preserved their liberties. The local rulers coined their own money. Persia itself had its own king and its own customs. Coins have been found, representing Ormuzd and the Mazdean religion, which good reasons have been given for ascribing to rulers of southern Persia during this period.[3] In every city there was a king, and it was in this sense that the Parthian first called himself, with literal truth, "king of kings," a title assumed by every master of the Iranian State. These institutions were inherent in the soil, learned from Persia and Greece. The

[1] Carré: *L'Ancien. Orient.* ii. 364.

[2] Rawlinson: *Sixth Oriental Monarchy*, p. 419.

[3] See the description of coins in Pehlevî legends, described by Levy (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxi. 440).

Parthian was himself their product, and he was not the first. Bactria had already, led by its Hellenic rulers, thrown off allegiance to the Seleucidæ, and revived its ancient glory. Alexander's death was the signal for local revolt. Even northern India hastened to refuse obedience to his successors.[1] Each of these States had its own hero or semi-divinity, a centre of enthusiasm for nobles and people, of a local pride and self-reliance, of which Firdûsî's epic gives the afterglow. It is curious to note that, notwithstanding the great variety of races included in the Persian empire, the names of most of these men of ideal will were Iranian.

If the Macedonian or Parthian kings could have become legitimate centres of the hero-worship so natural to their subjects, and made it a national instead of a localized instinct, they would have fulfilled the great opportunity opened by the conquests of Alexander. Some of them had commanding qualities, — Seleucus Nicator in the Macedonian line, Mithridates I. in the Parthian. But a succession of sanguinary conflicts, forever undecided, ruined every prestige of personal power; there was no towering personality, no natural king of the world, among these ambitious rivals. And so the States of Iran fell apart into their own natural position as individual atoms of Will. But more than that, there was no representative of the ancient war of Good against Evil; no son of Ahura to summon the masses of Iran with the old Zoroastrian warnings and commands; no supreme ethical principle embodied in royal lives that lived and died for its sake, and passed on its immortality, in a line like that of the old Avestan saviours of mankind. There were merely so many warring wills; and mere will-force, without the flame of ethical law for its divinity, could make no permanent impression on the Iranian mind. And if it is the experi-

[1] Justin, xv. 4.

ence of all subsequent ages of Aryan and Semitic development, that personal Will, as ultimate authority, can never make a permanent government, this is only because such will can never become the permanent basis for philosophical or religious belief. Political stability, though inconsistent with established creeds, yet rests directly on the religious nature; and the natural religion of Iran demanded either a succession of wills great enough to represent its living God, or else a system of ethical principles and spiritual beliefs embodying his enduring righteousness. The Seleucide kings aimed to satisfy the first of these alternatives. They aped divinity, and were adored with sacrifices, and put their images among the gods. They counted time from the dates of their accession to the throne. They worked effectively at building cities, opening trade, and circulating Greek culture, and made many admirable laws. But these claims had small value in Iranian eyes in comparison with the consecrated local instincts and personal loyalties which the foreigner overrode. Alexander had wisely put local opportunities into native hands; but the satraps of the Seleucidæ were Greek. The subject States saw their tributes squandered by luxurious and sensual courts, by men of foreign language and belief. Domestic feuds and family tragedies were bad arguments to prove the divinity of a line of kings; so were rival ambitions, and the cruelties of jealousy and fear. The old indigenous feudalism, based on a heroic impulse, sought its natural king; and so the old experience was repeated in the case of the Greek empire in Asia, which we have already described as befalling the empires which preceded it on the soil of Iran. Individual States, such as Parthia and Bactria, the mother-land of the faith, broke away from the central government, leading their Greek satraps, where these were competent, first into independence, and then, as the substitution of Bactrian for

Greek legends on the coins clearly shows, into gradual adoption of the local traditions and life.[1] And finally Parthia, remotest of these States which had grown by such local training, and so little known on its Turanian borders that no Greek had thought of paying heed to its growth, puts forth a natural master of men, seizes the unwieldy empire, — as the Persian, and before him the Mede, had done, — and proves again that on this soil new energy was always to be supreme.

There was much in the Parthians to rouse the hero-worship of Iran. They were bold riders, and made the bow and arrow historic. The crescent and star on their standards were significant emblems to the "fire-worshippers," and anticipated those of great nations and religions. Doubtless the military energy which gave them the mastery of the Persian empire from the Euphrates to the Hindu Koh, and which was the only power capable of checking the advance of Rome to world-dominion, — conquerors of Antony and Crassus, and during their whole existence the terror of the Roman soldier, to whom a Parthian campaign was the saddest of tidings, — was not entirely due to inherent qualities in the race. It was encouraged by the natural difficulties in the way of invading their country, and, aided by the effects of their guerilla warfare on horseback, a novelty to their European foes. But they had really great valor and endurance; they were as terrible with the long lance as with the distant arrow. Crassus was told by fugitives that they could neither be escaped when they pursued, nor caught when they fled; and that their strange arrows reached their mark before they seemed to have been shot.[2] Theirs was the great historic function of preserving the self-respect of Asia, and of holding over the traditions of the Persian empire till its glorious revival under the Sassanide kings. Without

[1] Lassen: *Ind. Alterth.* ii. 311.

[2] Plutarch: *Vita Crassi.*

them the strong organizing hand of Rome would have crushed the freer feudalism of Iran, and that splendid literary and artistic era would probably never have dawned. Intolerant in their faith, the native Sassanide dynasty inherited an earnest and spirited people, whose idealism had been allowed free growth under the Parthian rulers, so that the requisite element was provided for counteracting the hard, practical, and political realism of Rome.

It was reported of the Parthian kings that they always respected the sacred rights of ambassadors, and never violated their treaties; that they were on the whole kind to their prisoners of war, gave asylum to fugitives, and admitted foreigners to offices of trust.[1] Germanicus, one of the best of the Romans, was in especial honor among them.[2] Their dynastic broils, on which the Roman historian Tacitus dwells, were at least proofs of remarkable individual force. He also says of the people, that they were constantly quarrelling with their princes, and regretting the loss of them when they had been expelled. These kings have the usual tragic record of crimes which belongs to all the dynasties of the time; but, in comparison with that of the Roman Cæsars, all Parthian enormities become respectable.

The condition of the Parthian empire in the early part of the third century B. C. prepared the way for the Sassanian revolution. Persia had lost its imperial name, divided into eighteen independent States; but the province of Fars, which had been the mother of that name, was most thoroughly alive to its heroic and sacred traditions, and persuaded that a great future awaited them out of the political anarchy and disintegration of the Arsacide State. The theory that the native uprising was due in large degree to the influence of the Semitic element of the population, and in pursuance of Semitic in-

[1] Rawlinson: *Sixth Monarchy*, pp. 413, 426.
[2] See Tacitus, ii. 58.

terests,[1] has no other apparent ground than the religious intolerance that characterized it; and this was so decided in the Mazdean faith as to need no aid from the narrowness of the Semitic. The disciples of Ahura were not likely to be gratified by the easy secularism of the Parthian. In their eyes, probably his heaviest oppression consisted in his latitudinarian treatment of creeds. They could not bear to see other priesthoods put on an equality with their own; for the worship of Ahura was the service of an all-commanding exclusive Will. Gobineau's idea, that the rebellion was an insurrection of the peasantry (*jaquerie*) directed against turbulent nobles, may or may not be partly true; but the utter extermination of the Parthians by Ardeshîr Bâbegân shows that only religious zeal could have been the prime mover of the war. And this motive, aided by the free communication between all parts of Iran, and brought under the influence of a common personal admiration for the great qualities of Ardeshîr, broadened into a patriotic ardor, which effaced local jealousies, and re-created the empire out of the very essence of its historic life. The old religious organization of the empire, in accordance with the Zoroastrian Amesha-çpentas, was not only preserved under the Sassanian régime, in "seven great families," clothed with exalted and hereditary rights, but constituted a thread of political continuity which extends from the early Achæmenidæ down to the end of the native Persian State.[2] So the old lower-landed nobility (*Dihkânân*) were still administrators of local functions in the time of the Mussulman conquest.[3] The five classes of this native aristocracy resisted all processes of centralization, and kept alive the local independence so dear to the Iranian mind.

[1] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 604.
[2] See Nöldeke: *Tabari*, p. 437. (*Uber die inneren Verhältn. d. Sassanidenreichs.*)
[3] Ibid., 440. Also Masûdi: *Meadows of Gold*, v. 33.

Against all these individual elements the Sassanian kings had a hard struggle to maintain an authority won only by the revolutionary energy of Ardeshîr; and their success was due not so much to any power they possessed to disturb the traditional organism of the State, as to the influence of personal character, and the seizure of special opportunities to make good their private interests and gratify their desires. The clergy grew, under the religious earnestness of the dynasty, into a close and highly organized body, and formed a kind of "State within the State," whose power was often leagued with that of the nobles against the king, and who knew as well as any other priesthood how to persecute and rule. The empire, divided into prefectures, was loosely related to the central power; the army, a cumbrous feudal mechanism, was under the immediate control of the higher nobility. Nevertheless, the kings had the old prestige of Iranian will-worship. They called themselves "gods," or rather "the seed of God," and took the names of national deities, not exactly as identified with them, but as claiming to be under their special care.[1] The common hope was to restore the old religious traditions. It was by representing these that Ardeshîr rose at once to the place of Cyrus in the hero-worship of his people; so that Gibbon thinks he must have been himself a Magus. Appealing at once to the popular instincts, he superseded the local chiefs. The revival was essentially democratic, so far as this was possible in an Oriental State. The popular element, thus revealed in Mazdeism, appeared in various ways. The native legends make Ardeshîr the son of a common shepherd, soldier, astrologer, or laborer, though descended from the great line of kings that ran back to the mythical Isfendiyâr;[2] and the impoverishment that had befallen this royal race

[1] Nöldeke: Tabari's *History of Sassanides*, pp. 451, 452.

[2] Masûdi; also Firdûsî.

was the mythic expression of the long eclipse of the Persian State. The last discrowned Sâssân had served a wealthy person named Bâbek,[1] whose daughter he married, and their son was Ardeshîr Bâbegân.[2] These humble relations of the new royalty were justified by the popular nature of his institutions. "He allowed no intermediate power," says Gibbon, "between himself and the people." The local chiefs had to yield to his personal sway. He deprived the satraps of excessive powers, and brought a standing army to hold them in obedience. The chroniclers prove at least his fame as a wise and just ruler, when they ascribe to him sentences like these: "No power without an army; no army without money; no money without agriculture; no agriculture without justice." "A king should be a father; but without religion he is a tyrant; and for a people to be without religion is simply monstrous." "The worst of kings is he who is feared by the rich and not by the bad."[3] "Four qualities are indispensable to kings: a natural magnanimity; goodness of heart; firmness to repress social disorder; and justice enlightened enough to give no occasion to any loyal subject to fear for his life, his honor, or his estate."[4]

Burning to restore the ancient faith and freedom, Ardeshîr pushes his way to high office in his native Fars, refuses to be superseded, and the whole province backs him in his revolt. He defeats and slays Artabân, the Parthian king, in the battle of Hormuz; and, after Oriental fashion, strengthens his position by marrying the king's daughter. Imperilled by the ambition of his brother and his wife, he puts them out of the way; and, apparently

[1] Or Pâpak. In the inscriptions he is called Sap or "king." Others say he was the son of a noble, and revolted.

[2] Nöldeke's translation of Tabari's *History of Sassanides*, p. 34. Tabari gives the legends about Ardeshîr: his predicted sway, his slaying the petty kings, his motive for avenging the murder of Darius. Troyer's note on p. 105. Dabistân, vol. i. Rawlinson: *Seventh Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 30–32.

[3] Firdûsî.

[4] Bernard: *Chroniques Orientales*, p. 99.

shrinking from no severity necessary to make secure his throne, proceeds to lay the foundations of the grandest epoch of Persian nationality.

Ardeshîr is regarded by the Persians as entitled to a still more enduring glory. Their traditional code, the basis of their civil polity for many ages, was his work; their lost and scattered religious books came down recovered, reconstructed, given to the people through his pious hands. El Masûdi, the Moslem writer, says "the satrapies were in anarchy, after Alexander's death, till Ardeshîr united the empire, restored order, established religion, advanced agriculture, preparing the way for the greater prophet sent of God to destroy every infidel creed.[1] Firdûsî tells us that he organized labor, forbade bribery, enforced good administration, enjoined forbearance in war, and mercy to the defeated foe; that he established schools and altars in every street, suffered none to remain in want, exhorted his son Hormazd to obey God and seek refuge in him alone. His administration, which promised equal laws, personal security, and suppression of feudal tyrannies, was doubtless a mighty revolution, so far as the old aristocratic nobles were concerned, many of whom were driven out of Persia proper into Seistan, where the Afghan clans still represent the old jealous hate of centralized government. Though labor was freed from many galling exactions, the feudatories were by no means extinguished, and the people, brought directly under the strong hand of royalty, were subjected to strict sumptuary laws and stern religious disciplines. It is charged that, while destroying the great nobles who endangered the throne, Ardeshîr not only retained a noble class distinctly marked off from the masses, but held to the necessity of a permanently poor class, as a durable basis for the political

[1] *Meadows of Gold*, chap. xvii. Malcolm: *History of Persia*. Carré: *L'Ancien Orient*, ii. 365.

structure.[1] Many cruelties are ascribed to his penal legislation, while he is credited with many mitigations of older customs.

But whatever merits entered into his system, it was certainly the union of Church and State in the most aggressive form. The sentiment, already quoted as ascribed to him, that a people without religious institutions is a monstrous form of society, meant a great council of priests, in whom was vested direct control over the descent of property, over police and private affairs, and who had the principal voice, through their chief, in determining what were the last instructions of the king before his death concerning the succession to the throne, which could only be filled by a sworn servant of Ahura.[2] In an empire which for centuries had been the home and the debating-ground of religions (of Mazdeism, Buddhism, Hellenism, and Christianity), he let loose the hounds of a merciless intolerance,—the old Avestan hate of the unbeliever in Ahura, the fierce exclusiveness that lurks in the worship of a monarchical will. He destroyed every graven image, trampled out every foreign cult, and put his host of Mobads at the head of the State. Till the Arab came to substitute for Mazdeism a god and prophet as jealous as its own, the law of Ahura was the government of Iran. Here and there a Sassanian king was great enough to bring out its humanities rather than its fanatic zeal; but most of the line were persecutors. The chronicles tell us that Ardeshîr commanded his Mobads to provide one of their number who should "divest himself of the body, and bring intelligence of heaven and hell." Hence the Vision of Ardâi-Vîrâf, who is selected out of forty thousand, as the one sinless saint, to receive the revelation in sleep. The work whereof

[1] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. p. 626, 627.

[2] Nöldeke (Tabari, p. 26) records him as having fulfilled an oath of his ancestor Sâssân to destroy every Arsacide. Nöldeke thinks he is greatly overrated, and was a cruel, ambitious despot, p. 8.

this story is the mythical explanation is in substance preserved, and combines the two opposite elements of the Avestan faith to which we have referred. Led through all the spheres by guardian angels of the Avesta, and with performance of its sacred rites, this older Dante beholds in types of sense the rewards and punishments of Mazdean futurity. Amidst the delights of heaven are the spirits of all who have observed the solemn festivals, — the priests and their attendants, the heroes of the faith, the souls of shepherds and husbandmen, and makers of gardens and fertilizing streams. In fetid winds and waters of hell, in night and cold, tormented by demons, and horrible food, are not only shedders of innocent blood, slanderers, extortioners, sensualists, hypocrites and liars, defrauders of labor and oppressors of the poor, betrayers of trusts, but breakers of the ritual observances and laws of purification, even those who have wept for the dead, or slayers of four-footed animals, such as water-dogs, and in general all who have befriended those hostile to the faith.[1] A more extended version of the book shows it intended to announce that all existing religions but the Mazdean were inventions of the enemy, and to embody the purpose of the revival, which was to put an end to the long-continued ferment of differing creeds in Iran.[2]

But if such was its purpose, the multiplication of beliefs which followed it, and the profound influence of the Sassanian empire on the development both of Christianity and Islam, show that the native energy of Mazdeism could not be confined to these destructive channels. And we are disposed to think that the work of Ardeshîr was essentially constructive; that it supplied the concentration of forces, political and religious, needed to counterbalance

[1] See Dabistân, i. 283–304. Ardâ-î-Vîrâf is mentioned in the later Yeshts of the *Avesta*, and his work is believed to have been sent by Nûshirvân, in the sixth century, as a kind of Mazdean Bible, to all the provincial governors of the empire. (Ibid., 285.)

[2] Gobineau : *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 630.

similar forces, — at least equally exclusive and tyrannical, — by whose rapid organization in the Western world the faith and freedom of Asia were alike threatened with destruction.

The military and political energy of Ardeshîr was more than rivalled by the reign of his successor, Shapûr I., in whom all the pride of the Assyrian and the world-ambition of the Achæmenidan were renewed. Shapûr avenges the East upon the West. He defies Rome, devastates her provinces, defeats her armies on their own soil, drags her emperor in triumph to Ctesiphon, his Persian capital, gives her legions a new general, and clothes an obscure fugitive from Antioch with the imperial name. The inscriptions give no support to the story of shocking barbarities inflicted on the captive Valerian.[1] An immense irrigating system of canals, and a dike twenty feet broad and twelve hundred feet long, built to turn the Karun upon the plains around a city of his own creation, were monuments of his devotion to Ahura's law, — another grand type for Iranian hero-worship, which did its best to make him immortal in stone. There stands his statue, a colossal image twenty feet high, hewn out of the natural rock, of noble proportions, the hand resting on the sword.[2] That towering head-gear, with eagle's wings poising the globe in air, speaks the true Shâhân-shâh, — the king aspiring to godhood by right of will. And again the sculptures show

[1] According to Firdûsî, Shapûr, visiting Roum (Ctesiphon), was taken by the emperor when under the influence of wine, sewed in the skin of an ass, and thrown into prison, whence he was delivered by a young girl of Iranian descent, who swears to keep his secret by everything sacred in all existing religions, and by her love and fear for the Lord of Iran. She softens the ass-skin with milk, and they escape together. When the emperor in his turn is defeated and taken prisoner, Shapûr revenges himself by cutting off his ears, piercing his nose, and casting him into prison; while the people of Roum refuse to recognize him, his name is accursed, his altars are cast down, his bishop's crosses and girdles burned. "Roum and Canoudj differ no more, for the voice of the Messiah's faith is dead." (Mohl's *Firdûsî*, v. 465.) The unhistorical character of this legend is clear enough. Tabari celebrates his virtues (Nöldeke, pp. 31-33), among them his distribution of treasures to the poor on his accession, and his deference to the claims of his nobles.

[2] See Rawlinson: *Seventh Oriental Monarchy*, p. 605.

him riding in triumph, holding a conquered Cæsar with one arm while he guides his steed with the other, the embassies of nations on their knees around him, pleading for mercy or for ransom for the royal captive, it would seem, in vain. How these Persians seized the historic value of his achievement, lavishing upon it such munificence of art as that of the great tablet representing his triumph by a hundred and fifty figures, animal and human! Their colossal carving delighted in the theme of the royal sons of Ahura charging the children of Ahriman on steeds full of nervous power, kings dead and still beneath their feet, or Ahriman himself grovelling in chains before them. Never was the heroic ideal of Mazdeism so fulfilled as in this Sassanian line. They more than made good the terrible prestige won by Parthian arms; holding Cæsar after Cæsar at bay, carrying one away captive, annihilating the splendid army of a second, and defeating a third, alternating defeat with victory, for centuries the only counterpoise to the power that was to rule the world at last. Gibbon describes it as the height of the Emperor Julian's ambition, "despising the trophies of a Gothic victory, to chastise the haughty nation" which, as he had said in his satire on the Cæsars, had so defied the Roman arms that in a war of three hundred years they had not subdued a single province of its dominion.[1] But the chastisement fell upon his own head, and he died amidst his routed and panic-stricken army, retreating from the desperate courage of a people who dared to sacrifice all they possessed that the invader might be fought with famine and fire, if heroic swords should fail.[2]

Shapûr II., the conqueror of Julian and his magnificent Roman and Arabian army, was as great a general as the first of his name. In his youth he delivered Iran from

[1] Gibbon, xxiv.

[2] Gibbon's noble chapter on the expedition of Julian.

the earliest incursions of Arab hordes; in his maturity he imposed a degrading treaty on Rome. Khosrû I. and II. were equally famous in the Roman wars; the latter captured Jerusalem, and his general failed to take Byzantium only from the want of a fleet. In all his campaigns against Rome the first Khosrû was never defeated but once, and his treaty with Justinian, framed upon terms of equal advantage to both empires, became historic by a provision which enjoined upon that persecutor of Greek culture to receive again the seven great heathen teachers whom he had banished, and restore their freedom of speech. Yezdegerd,[1] the last of the line, though not himself a soldier, but inclined to the luxurious habits of the old Persian kings, vigorously resisted the Moslem invasion in the seventh century for twenty years, and only yielded at last to a fanaticism of conquest before which no nation on the earth could stand.

And the spirit of the Sassanian kings was always shared by the local chiefs, when it was itself heroic; and when it was tyrannical or weak, they recalled the old liberties of Iran, and either dethroned the monarch or dismembered the State.[2] They set aside Kobâd for his adherence to the communistic schemes of Mazdak, and after his death determined the succession. When Hormazd IV., after

[1] Yezdegerd, called "the Wicked" by Tabari, and by the priestly traditions of Persia charged with every kind of oppression and cruelty, seems to have lived in intense strife with his nobles and other privileged classes, who took their revenge on him for his resistance to their authority. The Christians on the contrary, who were humanely treated by him, as well as the Jews, regarded his memory with affection, and called him "the Blessed." (Nöldeke's note to p. 75.)

Similar differences of judgment attach to the memory of Hormazd, the son of Khosrû, whom Firdûsî treats with great severity, while Tabari says he had strife only with the privileged classes, and was a lover and benefactor of the poor. (Nöldeke, p. 264.)

The struggle of the great Sassanians with their nobles was vain. In the later times the downfall of the State was foreshadowed by the disintegration caused by this class.

Varahrân V. was a brave, generous, and most popular prince, famous for dealing justly with all classes of his people, and forgiving all his nobles who sought to deprive him of his birthright (Malcolm, *History of Persia*, i. 91). His story in the epic of Firdûsî is a most fascinating picture of the hero, the philosopher, and the saint.

[2] These contentions, as described by Tabari and others, were incessant.

years of beneficent government, became a despot, the tribes revolted under leadership of their chiefs, who dethroned him and repaid his cruelties by depriving him of sight. Then they placed his general at the head of the State; and when forced to receive his son as their king they refused to be placated, even though a Roman army was brought to his assistance. This son Khosrû II., called Parvîz, a man of capricious and cruel temper, but a great promoter of art, order, and social prosperity, when he fled behind the walls of Ctesiphon from the Roman army of Heraclius, was imprisoned and put to death by his indignant nobles,[1] who had seen their cities burned, their sacred fires extinguished, and their people transported by thousands at a time. It was Khosrû II. who tore up Mahomet's letter demanding submission to Islam, and flung its fragments into the Kara-Su, — which, says the Mussulman chronicler, shrank within its banks with horror, and refused to fertilize the land of a blasphemer. He had made Persia glorious abroad and prosperous at home. He had plucked out of the hands of Rome the holy city of the Jews, which had cost her such a terrible price, and made its hated Christians with their patriarch march out into captivity behind "the true cross," — the sign of the godhood of their Christ changed into a trophy of Ahura. His palace was the ideal of Persian pride and splendor, and his throne was girded with the twelve signs of the zodiac. Yet when he basely yielded to the advance of the invader, — or rather, according to Tabarî, when he overloaded the people with exactions, maltreated the nobles, and committed cruelties on soldiers and prisoners, — the patriotic chiefs forgot everything but the personal dishonor, and, led by his own son, deprived him at once of life and crown.[2]

In several instances the crown was seized by idolized generals, who made and unmade kings.[3] It was the army

[1] 528 A. D. [2] Nöldeke: *Tabari*, p. 356. [3] Ibid., p. 396..

that raised a daughter of Khosrû to the place of the first female ruler of Iran since the foundation of the empire, to be succeeded by her sister. The individual Will that had held its own throughout Iran for all these ages, and had spent its pride in upholding a throne of national glory, yielded its natural result when that throne was hastening to its fall. Pretenders to royalty arose everywhere, as in Rome in the latter days of the Cæsars; the crumbling crown was seized by hand after hand, and wrested from each within a few months. Province after province fell apart from the rest, and the empire was the prey of anarchy, simply from the absence of a personality great enough to stand as the ideal of these worshippers of heroic Will. It was this failure of the central ideal, not defect of courage, patriotism, or resource, which caused this great historic structure to go down before the blows of Rome on the one hand, and Islam on the other. The power of electing their king had come back to the nobles of Iran; but there was none to answer to the meaning of kinghood, and their selection of a prince of the old Sassanian line was a pathetic resort to legitimacy as their only hold upon the proud traditions of the State. In truth, the wealth and glory of Persia had made the imperial office a hotbed of vanity and luxury; and Iranian hero-worship had become dazzled by the vain show of earthly godhood with which it had clothed its object. The majesty of the Sassanian kings was lost, like the throne of Jemshîd, before the army of Heraclius had trampled on its pride. Yezdegerd had worn jewelry instead of armor. Khosrû had been seduced into luxurious habits by the conquest of Jerusalem. Kobâd II. had massacred his own family to secure the crown. The spoils captured and divided by the Roman chiefs in the palace of Ctesiphon, the golden horse covered with precious stones, the silver camel, the heaped-up gems, and the jewelled carpets of inestimable price, revealed that

the souls of these later Sassanians had been buried under the splendors of the mine. The old ideal of the servant of Ahura could not go hand in hand with these Ahrimanic seductions; and the national spirit was already broken when the united frenzy of the Arab and the Sirocco won the decisive battle of Kadisiyeh, and the glorious standard of Persian hero-worship, the blacksmith's apron, fell into the invader's hands. Every successive battle proved more clearly, that, while an ideal loyalty inspired the Mussulman, all-conquering mastership had departed from its own fatherland of Iran. Her vast armies were routed and exterminated by a handful of desert-born heroes, who had been scornfully called a lizard-eating, salt-drinking horde. When the elephants on which she had shifted the burden of defence that belonged to men, were once despoiled of their terrors by being turned upon their masters, the end had come; and the Persians saw their king, not at the head of his failing hosts, but in flight on the distant borders. The last of the Sassanians died miserably outside of his kingdom, — none knew certainly how or where. His predecessors had been puppets of factions, and doomed victims of the passions on whose crests they had been lifted up to momentary power. Another stream of Iranian fire had become extinct, having burned this time more than four hundred years.

The Iranian ideal comes to its typical form for the Sassanians, and we may perhaps say for the Persian race, in Khosrû I., who received the enviable title of "Soul of Sweetness" (*Nûshirvân*), to which was added "The Just" (*Al-Adil*). His reputation among his contemporaries was unrivalled. Agathias speaks of Romans as well as Persians who regarded him as having "reached the summit of philosophical and literary culture,"[1] being familiar through translators with the highest productions of Greek genius;

[1] *Historiarum libri*, ii. 28.

and although he treats this tribute with evident doubt, he does not hesitate to declare him the greatest of Persian kings, not excepting Darius, or Cyrus himself.[1] Mahomet is said to have held himself fortunate in being born during the reign of such a prince.[2] The ideal of an age must have shared its spirit; and this was an age when power was everywhere purchased by cruelty, from Christian bishops who proved their piety by massacring Arians and Manichæans, to the Mazdean king opening his reign by putting to death his own relatives who conspired to set him aside, and exterminating the heresy of Mazdak, which was perhaps necessary, by the sword. Heraclius tortured Jews and heretics; and Justinian depopulated whole kingdoms, and destroyed more than ten times as many Samaritan lives alone in the name of Christ as Khosrû destroyed Christian ones in the name of Ahura.[3] In a period when law had not yet either given security or set limits to personal power, the main condition of political or military success was to act with resistless energy in whatsoever of good or evil one had to do. It is certain that Khosrû could show better reason for his appeals to the sword than most rulers of his time could for theirs. His principal wars with Rome were incited by the appeals of oppressed provinces and peoples to his humanity.[4] The heresy of Mazdak, which had already carried away the court, perhaps from policy through a natural reaction against despotism, against property and the family, was one of those communistic storms which any civilized government must suppress, or itself perish.[5] The military energy of Khosrû was marvellous, and had not its equal in Eastern history. There was no Oriental enervation in the

[1] *Historiarum libri*, iv. 29.

[2] Gibbon, xlii.

[3] See Gibbon, chaps. xliii. xlvii (Milman's edition, ii. pp. 87, 99, 183). See also Procopius: *De Bell. Vand.* ii. And Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, pp. 284–288.

[4] Gibbon, ii. 77–82.

[5] See Malcolm: *History of Persia*, i. 108, 109.

will of this "king of kings." His wars with the Romans were a succession of rapid and overmastering blows, such as the capture of Antioch and other Roman cities, with an initiative which reminds us of the victories of Prussia in her war with Austria. Khosrû had the wealth of these great cities in his treasuries before Rome knew of his advance, and the foundations were laid in an hour of the prodigious riches which have made Persia the synonym of splendor ever since his day. He was never personally defeated but once. He made treaties in a grander style than other kings, — no ordinary truce between the standing hates of Asia and Europe, but peace which was to be as endless as their wars might have been; the eternal Ahura in place of an eternal Ahriman, — the glorious consummation of the universe. And when peace had to be broken, he pursued war also equally in the spirit of his faith, till he had secured fully equal terms with the conquerors of all other nations but his own. If the Christian dogma, at least as intolerant as his own, should not be expelled from Persia, it should not propagate there; and if Persia must give up her guardianship of the eastern coast of the Euxine, Rome must pay thirty thousand pieces of gold annually for an undetermined future. Only Belisarius could check his path to the mastership of the world; and from Arabia to the Transoxanian tribes, his armies dictated order and dynastic succession. Besides inflicting on Justinian the intolerable disgrace of an annual subsidy, he forced him to advance seven years payment of the same, thereby impoverishing the empire and crippling its resources for supplying mercenary troops.[1] Rome was in no condition to bear this drain. Justinian's administration was the most expensive and wasteful that had been known for a long period. At the same time the pay of the soldiers was cut down and came irregularly,

[1] Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, p. 326.

mercenaries were put in the place of provincial troops, and foreigners placed in command; the army was in disorder, and revolts incessantly weakened its discipline. Justinian failed to support his best generals, who alone, by the unaided force of military genius, sustained the fortunes of his decaying empire against every discouragement from within.

It was the Persia of Khosrû that brought to light the failing energies of Rome, and in every campaign showed far more energy than her mighty rival. There can be little doubt that his armies displayed more individual valor than their opponents, who relied more on traditional Roman discipline, which, as we have just said, was already on the decline. Finlay mentions the circumstance, strongly illustrative of our view of Iranian character, that the Roman officers caught from the Persians the passion for personal prowess;[1] and nothing could have been more unfavorable to that subordination and precision in which the strength of their legions consisted. Khosrû brought all the States into political unity and inspired them with a common loyalty, — an unprecedented achievement, and of itself sufficient to prove him the greatest ruler Persia had known. The old system of governing them by satraps, so fertile of fraud and dissension, was superseded by a fourfold division of the empire, each fourth being placed under a prefect, and including several provinces. Central supervision was maintained not only by the old expedient of official espionage, but by personal inspection. In both these ways Khosrû appears to have diligently watched over the comfort and security of the poorer classes, to whose appeal special courts of inquiry were always open. Poor and orphan children were the care of the State, and officials were bidden to carry the poor in their bosoms. For this kind of virtue the Mahometan

[1] Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, p. 258.

writers give him highest credit. Mirkhond relates that he executed eighty tax-gatherers at one time for extortion, and rendered taxation uniform, systematic, and moderate; exempting women, together with the very old and the very young. Many hundred years after his time, the people of Ctesiphon showed strangers a little house hard by the ruins of his palace, as a memorial of the humanity of the just king. When about to build a palace, Khosrû gave orders that all the buildings on the spot should be bought, and the highest price paid to their owners. But one poor old woman refused to sell her little homestead, saying that she would not give up the king's neighborhood for the whole world; whereat the king was so pleased, that he not only allowed the house to stand, but so improved it that it lasted longer than his palace itself.[1] "Irregularity with justice," added a courtier, "is better than symmetry purchased by wrong." The legend grew, of course always to the greater honor of the hero. Thus the servants of the palace complained to the king that the paintings on its walls were suffering from the smoke that came from the old woman's fire; but Khosrû commanded that the pictures should be renewed as often as they needed it, and that no one should molest the hearth of the poor.[2] It is related that being sick, the king was advised by his physicians to take as a remedy pounded brick from a ruined Persian town; but when the messengers returned from searching after it, they reported that not a ruined town was to be found in his dominions. When warned against going abroad without protection, he wrote: "Justice is the protection of kings." "All I give to worthy people is saved, not lost." "The happiness of his people is a better defence for a king than armies, and justice a better fertilizer of his lands than the happiest climate." To

[1] Travels of Yaçut-el-Rumi (twelfth century), *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xviii. 406.

[2] Caswine, ibid.

his son Hormazd he left this last injunction: "Remember the poor; and be not seduced by indolence and self-indulgence." And the pious son of Islam, catching this broad humanity of an unbeliever, concludes, — "Since death has not spared this great prince, the wise man should not attach himself to the goods of this world." [1]

A true Zoroastrian, Khosrû reorganized industry, and encouraged agriculture. After the fashion of model Oriental kings, he established a fixed land-tax, and advanced seed and implements to the husbandmen.[2] His laws provided for reclaiming waste lands; he enforced irrigation, punished idleness, and opened good roads through the empire. The great dike of Shuster, built of immense stones clamped together, is claimed as his work. To purify administration, the official "jackals" throughout the country were put to death.[3] To increase population, marriage was made compulsory, immigration encouraged, and colonists from conquered countries were settled on the land.[4] To protect his empire from the northern hordes, he completed the long wall commenced by Kobâd, famous as the barrier of Gog and Magog, of stones seven feet thick and twenty feet long, without cement, and which still stands stretching three hundred miles along the Georgian mountains; and in every treaty with Rome he jealously stipulated that both empires should unite in guarding these borders from the common foe. It was a curious instance of the intermingling of barbarous with humane impulses which characterized this great type of Iranian Will, that he built a new city out of the spoils of his terrible Syrian campaign, — a march as merciless to life as it was rapacious of booty, — put his Syrian captives into this new home as like as possible to that from which they were exiled, and

[1] Mirkhond: *Histoire des Sassanides*, translated by De Sacy.
[2] Malcolm: *History of Persia*, i. 115. [3] Ibid., i. 117.
[4] Rawlinson: *Persia*.

made it an asylum for Greek slaves. As he forsook the use of wood for that of stone in his public buildings, so he seemed to possess the gift in administration of putting everything to new and permanent uses. Thus the past and future of Persia centred in him. He revived the old code (or rather moral and political maxims) of Ardeshîr, and so ennobled it that its important features passed over into the golden age of the Mussulman caliphs. He made the priesthood watchers over the interests of the people by inspection of the conduct of officials. Above all, his services to literature and philosophy conferred immortal renown on his country and his race. Even on the Mussulman conquerors his intellectual reputation produced a kind of messianic awe, and took the usual mythical form of a childhood, before which the aged counsellors of the kingdom bent to hear a wisdom higher than their own.[1]

The testimony of Agathias to his encouragement of free discussion on theological and cosmical questions is qualified by the Byzantine's studied contempt for the sophist Uranius, with whom he declares the king to have been infatuated, and by his vivid description of the disappointment of the seven Greek scholars at the whole character of Persian civilization, which they had painted in ideal colors before their arrival at the court. According to Agathias, these cultivated men hurried away, persuaded that it would be better to suffer immediate martyrdom on reaching their native country than to endure the spectacle of such barbarous customs and corrupt administration. But the Greek historian evidently writes under a strong bias against "the barbarian," and contradicts that high repute of Persia in enlightened Athens on which the sages had based their glowing expectations, and in regard to which the Athenians could not have been mistaken. The trans-

[1] Mirkhond. De Sacy's translation of *Histoire des Sassanides*, p. 359. Nöldeke's *Tabari*, p 162.

cendental nature of the questions discussed at the court of Khosrû, although put in a ridiculous light by the shallow chronicler, prove intellectual tastes and sympathies of a high order. Here was a king of Asia who made actual what Alexander had dreamed; who had set translators at work upon all the great philosophies and poems of Greece; who could read and discuss them; who took pride in furnishing every aid to the Greek-speaking world for acquiring a knowledge of his country and its institutions;[1] who founded colleges and schools;[2] who stands out as a calm rationalist in relief against the fanaticism of his day; who compelled the priesthood of Ahura to meet and tolerate the speculative and religious thought of the world; who opened his arms to the representatives of Greek culture when their schools had been closed and their voices silenced by the Christian Church and State; and who made special provision for their liberty of teaching in his treaty with Rome.[3] "He began his reign," says Mirkhond, "by proclaiming that his power did not extend over the consciences of his subjects, since only the All-seeing could judge the heart; that justice, not caprice, should govern his judgments, and that administrative reform was his first duty. Behold the reward of righteousness; time has not been able to destroy the palace of Khosrû."[4] His interest in physical studies was a rare thing in that age, and could least be expected in an Asiatic monarch; and his medical school at Susa embraced the study of philosophy and poetry. His vizier, Abu-zurd-Mihir, raised from the lowest ranks through the penetration of the king, is scarcely less famous for wisdom and humanity than

[1] Through his favorite interpreter, Sergius, to whom Agathias was indebted for what he has recorded (History, iv. 30, Latin).

[2] So says Malcolm, i. 110.

[3] Nöldeke; *Tabari*, p. 162.

[4] Mirkhond: *Sassanian Kings*, translated by De Sacy. See also *Zeenut-ul-Tuarikh*. (Malcolm, i. 108), and Fîrdûsi's account of his talks with the Mobads.

Khosrû himself.[1] Firdûsî records his magnificent declaration of the rights of conscience.

But Khosrû's greatest services to future ages were performed in collecting and preserving the heroic legends of Iran, which were destined to become immortal as the Shâh-Nâmeh, or Book of Kings; and in bringing out of India, and transmitting through a Pehlevî version to all languages of the civilized world the oldest Bible for Rulers, — the marvellous Sanskrit Apologues, which are known to us, in substance, through two variations, the "Hitopadeça" and the "Pancha-tantra," — as the noblest treasury of practical wisdom and humane culture in the Oriental world. In what form this old Book of Wisdom was brought into Persia we cannot now tell; for, like the rest of the native Persian literature of the Sassanian period, the translation made by order of Khosrû perished at the Moslem conquest. We know it only through an expanded Mahometan-Persian version of the fifteenth century, — the "Anvâr-i Suhailî," or "Lights of Canopus," — and from the Arabic version of the eighth century of the "Book of 'Kalîlah and Damnah,'" of which the other was a secondary revision.[2] It is reasonable to suppose that the king's Pehlevî translation much more closely resembled the Hindu originals we have named, than do these later Mahometan ones. While the "Pancha-tantra" and the "Hitopadeça" themselves materially differ from each other in their list of fables, and still more in the maxims which are thickly strown among them, they are alike in their extreme directness and simplicity of form, which is in absolute contrast with the verbose and hyperbolic language of the later Persian "Anvâr-i Suhailî." Besides this difference of style, the Persian work contains a very large amount of material not to be found in either of

[1] See chap. on Shâh-Nâmeh.

[2] Both have been translated into English, — *Kalîlah and Damnah*, by Knatchbull, 1819; and the *Anvar-i Suhailî*, by Eastwick, 1854.

the others, and is thoroughly Persian in its character. But the spirit of all three is one and the same; and throughout all the changes undergone by this venerable Gospel of the Duties of Kings, there is no marring of the soul of justice, tenderness, nobility, and reverence for humanity which pervades these genial tales and aphorisms; no lowering of the tone of serious remonstrance and rebuke, of high exhortation couched in parable and hint and maxim; no wavering from the standard set before the sovereign, at the beginning of the "Anvâr-i Suhailî," when he accepts labor and trial for "the repose of his oppressed subjects and the peace of the poor among his people,"[1] and at the end when his epitaph reads, —

> "Two things life offers, — fame, the virtuous deed.
> Save these, '*All things are subject to decay.*'
> Injure not others, help men to succeed;
> Thus shalt thou reap a blessing for to-day —
> And the next world, when this hath passed away."[2]

Firdûsî tells us the legend, that Barsuyah the physician brought word to Khosrû of a Hindu book which taught how to bring the dead to life, where the wise interpreted the teaching to mean resurrection from the death of ignorance; and being successful in committing it piecemeal to memory, he brought it to Persia in great joy, saying, "The ocean of wisdom has indeed come to us," and begged of the king that the vizier in re-editing it might make the opening a memorial of himself.

This dumb morality, and the reverence for a Providential destiny, which is equally prominent in the Mahometan version, is in substance identical with the homely, practical, uninspired tone of the Hindu books, through all the difference of form. We may be sure that Khosrû's information of the world-famed book, "whose wisdom in all that befits a king had been compiled from the speech

[1] *Anvâr-i Suhailî*, p. 70. [2] Ibid., p. 649.

of animals," and his unspeakable desire to obtain it, were associated with these all-pervading qualities that make it so impressive to us; and if, as the Mahometan writer assures us, "his actions, as they may be traced in his justice and beneficence, his conquests of countries and his ways of soothing the hearts of his subjects, were based on the perusal of this book," we can understand why it is that he stands at the zenith of royalty for all Persian and even Mahometan faith.

The age of Khosrû brings him into direct contrast and comparison with another great monarch of equal fame, but of far inferior qualities, the head of Christendom as he was of Heathendom, — the Roman emperor, Justinian, with whose name are associated the compilation of Roman law and the general, though by no means final, suppression of Paganism in the Christian world. The most striking difference is that the glory of Khosrû is thoroughly personal, that of Justinian external and incidental. Justinian was a bad administrator of the empire, financial, political, civil, religious; he was a bigot, and an extortioner from the poor. "His victories and his losses," says Gibbon, "were alike pernicious to mankind." Italy and Africa were desolated; Vandals and Moors were slain by millions; and fifty thousand laborers were starved in a single district of Italy alone. "Khosrû," says Procopius,[1] "was a bad man, but it was Justinian who incessantly stirred up the Persian wars." Under his system of taxation, landed proprietors were impoverished and reduced to the level of slaves; his civil-service system was far more corrupt than the Persian, his treasury filled with the open sale of offices. He cheated his troops of their pay, heaped abuse upon his best generals, and left them unaided in face of overpowering foes. The whole empire was discouraged and demoralized at the moment when hordes of barbarians threatened its very

[1] *Historia Arcana*, p. 18.

existence with incessant raids and terrible devastations. He even cut down the army to save expense, while he lavished immense sums on public buildings and churches and monasteries. He closed the schools of philosophy, and destroyed the municipal institutions of Greece. He abolished the Olympic games, but encouraged the frightfully riotous and internecine factions of the circus. He emptied the local treasuries of Greece, and gave over her cities to ruin. The central authority was broken down for all purposes but that of persecution, and its place filled with the anarchical wilfulness of soldiers, monks, usurers, sects, and officials.

And perhaps one main reason, that with all the military prestige of the Roman empire it found itself again and again beaten back by Persia, lay in this premature disintegration by the extortionate, selfish, and intolerant policy of Justinian and his successors. Nothing in his private character could justify confidence or quicken the failing patriotism of the empire. John of Cappadocia, notoriously the most villanous ecclesiastic of his day, was his special favorite. His early intrigues and crimes, and his uxorious submission throughout his long reign to the unscrupulous Theodora, whose vices filled all the best historical writers of the age with indignation and contempt, gave added impulse to the downward tendencies of the State.[1] That dissolution of nationality into multitudes of discordant, rebellious wills, which befell the last days of Sassanian Persia, began at a much earlier moment in the Græco-Roman empire; and in both, the compensation was a return in some measure to that force of personality which always conditions the passing away of old systems, and the entrance of new social or religious forces.

It might be supposed that the new life thus introduced into the decaying frame of Justinian's empire was Chris-

[1] Gibbon, xlvii.

tianity; but Christianity was itself the religion of the State, the narrowing creed, the rule of ecclesiastical councils and military edicts, tending to the utter annihilation of personal freedom and rational inquiry. The new life which national disintegration indicated was the birth of heresy everywhere, the heroism of martyrs, the building up of a rival religion, which absorbed great sections of the Roman world.

It is stated by Procopius, that the persecutions by Justinian of Christians and Pagans alike not only caused great religious revolts in various parts of the empire, which resulted in multitudes of deaths by suicide and war, and great accessions to Paganism and Manichæism, but that by reason of them great numbers fled for shelter to nations outside of Roman or Christian sway.[1] His superstition made him a willing tool of an intolerant priesthood, so that, as Gibbon says, "his whole reign was a uniform yet various scene of persecution." He gave bishops the right to use the military arm to compel conversions. He was so foolish as to believe that all the heresy in his empire could be abolished by a three months' warning to be converted or banished, and Paganism be destroyed by inquisitors; also for the crime of a creed, he stamped out almost the whole nation of the Samaritans, from which his Master had brought a type of humanity to rebuke the priests and Levites of his own race. He refused unbelievers in Christianity the right to testify, to teach, or to bequeath, and imposed death as a penalty for refusing baptism. But by the irony of events, this arch-persecutor of heretics died not without the taint of heresy upon his name.

Every portion of the empire was devastated by these systematic attempts to eradicate both Pagan and heretical belief,[2] and the Byzantine historians even talk of a

[1] Procopius: *Historia Arcana*, xi.

[2] Gibbon, chap. xlvii. pp. 182-83. Finlay: *History of Greece*, p. 324.

depopulation of the world by his religious wars.[1] The ecclesiastical writers themselves denounce the imperial couple of "Christian" propagandists, whose very differences and discords added to the general miseries.[2] "They seemed not human, but some malignant form of demonic existence sent to plague mankind."[3] Yet all their barbarity failed to eradicate Paganism, which was destined to reappear in a more powerful form than ever, when the gigantic empire of Islam arose among the outposts of the empire, and drove back the advancing tide of Christianity from some of its fairest portions. Nor must we forget that this new form of Paganism not only drew under the shelter of its wings some of the best elements of Christianity,[4] as well as of Mazdeism, but also contained within itself principles, spiritual and ethical, at least as elevated as the degenerate church of the later Roman empire.

In truth, the fall of the Byzantine as well as that of the Persian State illustrates the destiny of politico-religious systems based on the authority of Will.[5] Justinian and his successors absorbed all those duties which truly educate the citizen, into absolute personal government, directed by the absolutism of a monarchical Church, whose sovereign will they claimed to represent. Justin, Maurice, Phocas, Heraclius, some of them really good and able men, all pursued the same policy of unifying the religious beliefs of the empire by the often barbarous exercise of despotic will; and so the destruction of all those broad national sympathies and institutions by which a people are trained to obey good laws and confide in those who administer them, went on in spite of every virtuous effort by the ruler to reconcile his system with the public good.[6] When the

[1] Procopius: *Historia Arcana*, xviii. [2] Ibid., iii. [3] Ibid., xii.

[4] For example, Nestorian schools of Syria, after their expulsion by Justinian, and then by Leo the Isaurian.

[5] Procopius: *Historia Arcana*, xxx.

[6] See the striking picture of these tendencies in Finlay's *Greece under the Romans*. Zeller: *Entretiens sur l'histoire*, x.

Persian empire neared its fall, it had gone through similar disintegrating phases, not so much from the absolutism of orthodoxy as from the weakness of monarchs who failed to justify the popular demand for heroic personal ideals. The logic of human nature brought a common result to both. But a new and stronger will than royal vicegerent of Ormuzd or of Christ appeared in the Allah of Islam, whose decrees wrought in his servant's will with the resistless power of Fate.

There is indeed another side to this picture of Justinian, which has doubtless been colored by partisan feeling. His private habits seem to have been pure,[1] and his passions under control. There are evidences of real humanity in his re-enactment of Constantine's law against gladiatorial shows; and his literary and artistic tastes were proved by a multitude of public works, as well as by his constant intercourse, within the limits of his creed, with men of high culture in every department of thought and action. In all these respects he is not discredited by comparison with his great contemporary. He was a centre of illustrious men; his great architect Anthemius, his great jurist Tribonian, his great generals Belisarius and Narses, his great historian Procopius, were a glory of which any emperor might be proud. Above all, the devotion of the great legal talent of the age to the codification of Roman law out of the confused heap of traditions, decisions, and special codes gathered from the writings of forty civilians, and the concentration of two thousand treatises into fifty books; the separation of all these data into their historical elements and order of growth, and the stamping of the whole with the fruits of Roman civilization in the jurisprudence of his own time, — this marvellous substructure of the legislation of the modern civilized world is an achievement which

[1] It will not do to attach too much confidence to the strange revelations of Procopius, in his *Secret Memoirs*, which differ so utterly from his *Public History* of the Emperor.

may well immortalize the names of all who had share in its accomplishment. For the public spirit, the persevering energy, the legal acumen and research required for this vast undertaking, the praise belongs to Justinian and the great lawyers whom he selected for it, — especially to Tribonian, the master-spirit of the whole. But that which constitutes the immortal value of the Pandects and the Code does not belong to that age, or to its ruling spirits in government or law. Their best was not the work of Christian emperors. Their limitations to the "patria potestas;" their steps towards testamentary justice, towards the emancipation of women and of slaves; their broad recognition of the *jus gentium* or laws of universal application as distinguished from the privileges of Roman descent or rights of conquest, — whatever gives breadth and permanent value to this monument of jurisprudence was mainly the work of a nobler and freer age, the product of the spirit infused into Roman law by the great Stoic school, centuries previous, when they brought the equity of their philosophical "Law of Nature" to bear upon the accumulating laws of nations and the prætorian edicts by which these were administered as nearly as possible upon a common basis; and not only upon these, but upon the civil law of the Roman State, as developed through successive ages and codes.[1] The effect of this grand ethical conception of Stoicism was the rapid adjustment of laws to universal principles of justice and the rights and duties of humanity. The great age of Roman jurisprudence covers the reigns of Hadrian and the Antonines.[2] The imperial constitutions which succeeded that period are marked by reaction to despotic sway, and by increasing servility in the construction and interpretation of laws. And the treatment of this nobler legislation by Justinian

[1] See Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 65.
[2] Compare Woolsey's Introduction to *Roman Law*.

and his supple parliament of jurists was in full keeping with these accepted requirements of the interests of the State. Besides avoiding the freer and purer spirits of the old republic, they corrupted the records of these best days of the empire, and blotted out the noblest statutes, which they dared not indorse. And so unscrupulously was this done, that "the contradictions of the Code and Pandects still exercise the patience and subtilty of modern civilians." [1] How far the same hands are responsible for the disappearance of the greater portion of the literature and data of Roman jurisprudence is uncertain; the charge of a deliberate purpose to destroy what did not suit the despotic aims of Justinian has no other ground than the suppression and corruption already mentioned. But the work which was to supersede them came very near to sharing their fate; and it is said that all the manuscripts of the Pandects are derived from one original, preserved with devout care in the palace of the Florentine republic.[2]

The jurisprudence of Justinian was in fact no exception to the general spirit of his reign. Whatever the opportunities, afforded by his grand survey of national experience, he discovered no means of staying the degeneracy of Roman civilization. As compared with Constantinople at this period, Persia was a country of order and law. The horrible anarchy of the circus, with its incessant bloodshed and sensuality (so vividly described by Gibbon),[3] stimulated to its worst excesses by the emperor's own eager support and encouragement of the most barbarous of the factions,[4] was unparalleled in any heathen land. In the ferocious brawl of the Nika sedition, the best part of the city was ravaged and burned by the savage factions of the Blues and Greens, and thirty thousand persons slaughtered, — a carnage suppressed only by the vigor

[1] Gibbon, chap. xliv. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., chap. xl.

[4] See Zeller's account of the massacre of the Nika (*Entretiens sur l' histoire*), chap. x.

of Belisarius. Yet these factions were deliberately encouraged by the imperial champions of Christianity and law. The long, lingering decay of the Byzantine empire, — plucked by barbarians and assailed by Turks, torn by political and religious factions, by strife with Rome and Alexandria, crazed with theological disputes, — was one wretched commingling of rebellion, assassination, and distraction, dominated only by the insane endeavor to enforce uniformity of religious belief. The military and administrative genius of Heraclius furnished the only check upon this headlong descent. And when Persia fell under the sway of Islam, a future of intellectual and political greatness opened upon her, in striking contrast with the melancholy spectacle of this servile empire, the bequest of Justinian to his Church and his laws.

The fierce intolerance of Justinian, though in extreme contrast with the spirit of his Persian rival, was entirely in accordance with that of most Sassanian kings. Mazdeism, like Judaism and Christianity, could not tolerate a different object of worship from its own, because this object of its worship was a single personal Will, ruling its worshippers by direct command. The bitter exclusiveness of the Persian Mobads betrayed itself whenever they were intrusted by their kings with power, as invariably as did that of the Christian priesthood and Moslem orthodox upon a like opportunity. The Sassanian line began with an exterminating warfare upon all unbelievers in Ahura, whose holiness could not endure the presence of these servants of Ahriman; and their successors, for the most part, followed in the same track. From this intolerance the Jews were excepted, almost always continuing on good terms with the Persians, partly from a common veneration for the name of Cyrus, and partly from the very intensity of exclusiveness common to Ahura and Jahveh, which, combined with great ethical resemblance, strongly suggested

that they were one and the same God. The comparative weakness of the Jews and their hatred of Rome were also points of attraction for the Sassanian monarchs, who found Christianity far more dangerous than Judaism, and especially after its ascension to the throne of the Cæsars. Shapûr I., the great conqueror, was believed, from the inscription at Haji-Abad, to have embraced Christianity; but the reading has been shown by Haug to be erroneous. That he first encouraged Mani and then banished him, is uncertain tradition; that the great heretic returned, to be put to death by Varahrân II., is not improbable.[1] Shapûr II. was persecuting the Christians when Constantine came to the throne. Yezdegerd I., converted to Christianity, falls into deadly strife with the Magi, and is called "the Wicked;" then recurring to Mazdeism, he inflicts barbarous penalty on the Christians for five years. Varahrân I. puts them to torture. Yezdegerd II. imposes Mazdeism by force on the Armenian church (450 A.D.), and having quelled the revolt of Vartan, makes martyrs of all who would not recant. Khosrû II., professing Christianity, devout slave of the Virgin and of St. Michael, and husband of a Christian woman, surrendered Jerusalem to the ferocity of Jewish and Persian priests, who massacred or banished the whole Christian population, on pretence of punishing them for hiding "the true cross."

That this chronic intolerance proceeded from the nature of personal Will as the ideal of worship, is evident from the fact that these Sassanian kings, so far from being men of cruel disposition, were generally, in civil affairs, benevolent and just. To Hormazd I. is ascribed the institution of a court for trying complaints of the poor against the rich, over which he often presided. The chief persecutor of Christian-

[1] Although the savage cruelty of his execution, as described by Tabari (Nöldeke, p. 47), is probably a fiction, at any rate Manichæism was fiercely persecuted, though in no wise put down.

ity, Varahrân V., was held a model king in his treatment of his people, and in his regard for arts, sciences, and all the functions of the State.[1] Pêrôz, also intolerant, remitted all taxes during a seven years' drought, distributed corn and money, and used every expedient for the preservation of his people. Shapûr II., as bitter in his treatment of Christianity as he was heroic in his wars against Arabia and Rome, is credited with such maxims as these: "Words may be refreshing as the rain or sharp as a sword." "A spear may be drawn out of a wound, but a harsh word cannot be plucked out of a wounded heart." Yezdegerd I. said that the wisest king is he who never punishes in anger, and follows his first impulse to reward the good.

The obscure history of Mazdak and his school of communists is a striking illustration of our position, that Sassanian severities in religion were consistent with a considerable degree of social and political freedom. This Mazdak admitted the national faith, but added a system of communism, abolishing marriage and property, and otherwise threatening the destruction of the whole social order. His following increased, till it became necessary to suppress the whole movement by the uprising of the better classes of the community. The king himself, Kobâd I., was infatuated with doctrines which would have swept away all royal government in an hour, and had to be dethroned. Restored by a Tartar army, he resumed his crown, forgiving his opponents, and discouraging the subversive school of Mazdak. Yet so deep-rooted was the evil, that Khosrû on his accession is said to have been obliged to suppress it by putting to death a hundred thousand persons. How much of historical truth is contained in these traditions is uncertain. But the fact is unquestionable, that this revolutionary system had been suffered to reach wide diffusion before it was put down by force; and such dif-

[1] See especially Firdûsî's *Bahrâm-gour.*

fusion implies a free circulation and discussion of social theories, and a power of association among the working classes, which we should hardly expect to find in that period or in an Oriental State. The protests against luxury and monopoly ascribed to Mazdak, his puritanism in diet and dress, and general preaching of self-restraint, hardly comport with the excesses which his followers are said to have committed against decency, property, and peace.

On the other hand, the persecution of the Manichæan heresy, both in the East and the West, grew directly out of the religious motive we have already described.

PHILOSOPHIES.

I.

MANICHÆISM.

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On the other hand, the persecution of the Manichæan heresy, both in the East and the West, grew directly out of the religious motive we have already described.

MANICHÆISM.

THE invincible exclusiveness of Mazdean will-worship was conspicuous in its treatment of Mani, who represented a natural growth of its own dualistic ideas, but combined these with a wide eclecticism, the equally natural result of the intrusion of numerous races and religions upon the soil of Iran. All tradition is agreed that Mani had attained the largest culture possible in his day. He was an astronomer, a physicist, a musician, and an artist of eminence, who could use his gifts with great effect, not only to charm the public taste, but to illustrate his own written thought. He had mastered the faith, first of the Magi, then of the Christians, and had travelled far and wide to the cradle-lands of other and older religions. It is not improbable that the eastern legend of his having sent out three apostles — Addas, Thomas, and Hermas — towards different quarters of the world, and of his personal relations with Scythianus and Terebinthus or Buddas (names that have no historic meaning, except as types of the Egyptian and Indian religions),[1] is simply the mythical expression of his eclectic method and wide religious sympathies.[2] Some of the early Fathers connect him with Brahmanism.[3] His followers identified him with Christ, Buddha, Zoroaster, and Mithra, and believed that all these religious names meant the one solar Deity.[4] His acquaintance with the Jewish Cabala and the Gnostic masters, who for a century had been constructing heretical systems

[1] Archelaus: *Disputatio cum Manete*, c. 51, 52.

[2] Lassen: *Ind. Alterth.*, iii. 405. Colditz: *Die Entstehung d. Manich.* (1837).

[3] Ephrem Syrus, and Epiphanius.

[4] Herbelot: *Bibliothèque Orientale* — Mani.

out of the combination of Syrian and Greek ideas with Christian faith, was complete. In his large survey, he rejected no belief by reason of prejudice against the system of which it formed a part. The asceticism and metempsychosis of the Brahman; the emanation and emancipation of the Buddhist; the mystical and prophetic element even in that Judaism whose Jahveh was in his belief a delusion and snare to man; the Dualism of the Persians, and the Saviour of the Christians, though under forms which materially differed from those of their respective orthodox creeds, — all entered into an elaborate system which seemed to be devised for meeting the largest number of special wants in an age of many conflicting religions and philosophical schools. When we add that he appeared in Persia at a time when two parties had arisen in the Mazdean church, — the one strongly dualistic, the other seeking to place a distinctly supreme unity beyond the two ethical contraries, — and that his own system took an intermediate ground, in some respects differing from both, in some agreeing with one or the other, — there seems to be no sufficient reason for doubting, as the historian of Gnosticism has done,[1] that Mani really purposed to construct a universal system out of the ferment of beliefs in his time. I cannot agree with Matter that this was unnatural in a philosopher of that age and country. On the contrary, circumstances seemed to make it the most natural thing in the world; and the probability is heightened by the remarkable union of imaginative and rationalistic elements in the system itself.

This is the higher significance of Manichæism, and affords the true point of view for explaining the extreme intolerance with which it was pursued by the three great religions, — Mazdeism, Judaism, and Christianity. The war waged against it was a war of narrow dogmatism against

[1] Matter: *Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme*, iii. 73.

universal tendencies, however imperfect their expression, however distorted by the false lights of the day. Through all historical doubts and conflicting details the one fact stands fast, — that wherever Mani appeared, or his system found foothold, they were persecuted with a ferocity unexampled even in the ancient world.[1] We must ascribe this fact to the boldness and breadth of his eclecticism; to the promise of his method to solve all religious problems by a Gnostic insight beyond and above all outward revelation by church or book; to its rationalistic criticism of the current grounds of belief; and to the seeming claims of the new apostle or paraclete to rival the head of the Christian Church, and to supersede Zoroaster and Moses, — to all of whom he seemed to give a recognition by accepting just so much of every system as would give him a hearing with its disciples, while subtly undermining it by a more stringent logic and a refusal of implicit faith. Firdûsî reports Mani as saying that his painting proved him a prophet, and asserts that he was put to death for his *image-worship*. Only these signs of a larger mental scope and freedom can account for the peculiar violence which marked the Manichæan persecutions down to the Middle Ages, when the name was applied to numerous heresies as the very strongest term of hatred and reproach. By the necessity of their belief, and by the confession of the best of their opponents, the Manichæans were pure in their morals; and the charges brought against them were precisely those of which the Christians had reason to know the worthlessness from their own experience of the same. Libanius the rhetorician, in his appeal to Constantine on their behalf, describes them as scattered over many countries of the earth, injuring none, but suffering injuries from many; abstemious, and counting death a gain.[2] Yet not

[1] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. Neander: *Church History*, ii. 770.
[2] Neander: *Church History*, ii. 768.

only was Mani cruelly put to death by Varahrân the Sassanian king, but the Christian emperors from Constantine to Justinian, with but one or two exceptions, tried perpetually to exterminate the sect. They were burned at the stake by Vandals in Africa, and by Catholic Christians in Europe for six centuries.[1] Augustine, converted from their communion to Christianity, turned upon them with all the bitter and arbitrary injustice of which his passionate nature was capable. And later Christian apologists have argued *a priori* the necessity of immorality, as a result of the Manichæan belief in the physical unreality of the Christ and in the impurity of the senses and sexual relations; unable to see that the very same tendencies were important factors in Christian faith, and led not only to the exaltation of Jesus above all laws and conditions of matter, but to the meritoriousness of celibacy and the monastic life. In the same way the division of Manichæan believers into the two classes of "hearers" and "elect" has been supposed to justify the same charges, in face of precisely similar distinctions in the Christian Church from the beginning to the present day! The Sassanians persecuted a Dualism which was the logical issue of their own creed, and the Jews a Cabalism which in substance they could find in their Talmud.

Such evil treatment of a system which sought to find points of sympathy with every one of the great religions of the world, becomes the more remarkable the more fully these points are appreciated. It must be remembered that Mani claimed to be a Christian, and that he was thoroughly a Gnostic, and in some points even a Judaistic, Christian. In his depreciation of the senses, though Mani forsook the first principle of Mazdeism, yet he was very far from anti-Christian. Even his Dualism, Mazdean in substance, was almost equally in accordance with Christianity, in which

[1] Trace this in Jortin's *Ecclesiastical History*.

Satan corresponded to his Evil Principle, dominating man till deliverance should come in the Christ. The light shining in the darkness, which comprehended it not, was the substance of both Alexandrian and Catholic theology, the soul of the Gospel of John as well as of the Avesta; and the emancipation of the Good Principle was as positively predicted by Mani as the triumph of Christ in the Gospels, or of Ahura in the Avesta. Nor is it easy to see how the developed creed of Christianity could have objected to Manichæan Dualism as a religious dogma, since the Christian God was admitted to be unable to eradicate evil from the universe, and his unity had slipped into trinity, and this had so verged upon tritheism as to fill the Church with irreconcilable contradiction and contention.

But these very points of resemblance did but aggravate the intense and peculiar hatred of the three great religions to Manichæism as the most intolerable of heresies. And for this there was a reason common to all three. They were all religions of personal Will. Jahveh, Ahura, Christ, were absolute sovereigns, whose laws, as personal commandments, permitted no rival authority, no suspense of faith, no balance of reasoning. In each of these religions an omnipotent Will, consciously engaged on the affairs of men, was the centre of all motive, the sum of all rights and claims. Creation was simply the act of that Will; sin was violation of its command; hell was the consequence of its wrath; heaven was the reward of its approval. What man was and was to be, what right and wrong meant, resulted directly from its determinations; and would have been other than they are, had these been different. This absorption of all being into the sovereignty of Will made each of the three contending religions essentially intolerant. It must deal with all other religions as rivals and foes; and the more bitterly, the closer these seemed to be to its own communion. For reasons already

given, Judaism and Mazdeism came to an accommodation without change of face. Between Judaism and Christianity the hatred was mutual and made irreconcilable by ages of Christian persecution, — perhaps the blackest page of religious bigotry in the whole history of man, all in consequence of supposed crimes against the person of Christ. No peace ever dawned on the hates of Christianity and Mazdeism, symbolized in the eternal strife of Persia and Rome. But a mightier Will swallowed the will of Ahura; and then came for Christianity another and more deadly conflict, lasting for ages, till at last Allah and Christ are stilled by the new world-forces which command that religion shall cease to be the worship of wills, and become the worship of universal principles and laws.

More intolerable, however, to Christianity than any outside rival personality was a system which arose within its own household in rebellion against the authority not of Christ only, but of Will itself. The system of Mani substituted principles for persons. This was the real though scarcely recognized secret of the hate and fear. It was the handwriting on the wall predicting death to arbitrary will in the name of reason, and instinctively the Church sprang to efface it. It is admitted that Mani was true to his Iranian origin in his ready spring from abstractions to concrete forms; [1] that his conception of world-processes and cosmic powers was dramatic, so that light and darkness were not only opposite substances, but living powers contending in space. But this was only the superficial poetic dress. He emphasized principles, and gave them a logical development inconsistent with personal caprice. He used Dualism not as the conflict of two opposite wills, one of which must triumph by the destruction of the other, but as the organic structure of the world, whereof all personal life is but the

[1] Spiegel has noticed this, but fails to see the deeper impersonality on which it rests. *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 206.

temporary expression. He laid the basis of his creed not in intentional and positive commands, but in the logic of essential causes. A true Gnostic, he put reason for outward revelation, philosophy for special providence, and creation itself was but a single sequence in the evolution of the inherent relation of good and evil. This rationalism was his unpardonable sin; and his eclecticism, pressing elements of all creeds into his service, not to aggrandize a special God, but to work out his principles on the broadest human scale, was simply an aggravation of it. We may here briefly illustrate our statement, before proceeding to that larger demonstration which its novelty may seem to require.

Light and Darkness, or Good and Evil, in the Manichæan system, although defined respectively as spirit and matter, were not distinguished as spiritual and material in our sense of those terms. Light was not separated, as purely conscious mind, from Darkness, as dead elemental substance. The moral distinction of good and evil controlled that difference. Although coarser and cruder than light, darkness was not confined to bodies; although more spiritual than darkness, light was not confined to spirits. The two opposites were Principles, without beginning and without end. The will of the Manichæan Christ could not destroy the Darkness, which remained after the element of Light had been mainly eliminated, and though buried out of sight it was kept in place by powers not free from the intermixture of evil with good. Its relation to man ceased, but not its essential reality as the opposite of good.

Evil, in Mazdeism infused from without into man to corrupt his native purity, is in Manichæism an organic part of him from the beginning, a principle developing itself in conjunction with good, the darkness that ever co-exists with the light; not the work of a personal tempter, not the product of a fall from obedience. If this antagonism

exists, reasoned Mani, how should it come but from the nature of things? A personal Will cannot have created good and evil, since its very life is in being conformed to one or the other. Neither can it end the evil which it did not create, except so far as to separate the good which is imprisoned in evil, and leave the last a barren principle of darkness, self-existing but inoperative on man. Behind all plans and purposes lies the unchangeable nature of things. It is the natural tendency of evil to mingle with good, and imprison it; of good, to escape the evil mingled with it, into purity and freedom. Hence a universe whose imperfect and struggling condition represents these opposing forces. And of these man is the product,—an imprisoned light-essence, involved in darkness, seeking its native element, aided by the whole world of Light, held back by the whole world of Darkness,—who at length through the pervasion of the whole universe by the all-mastering suffering of the soul of Humanity, as the Son of Man, is delivered from the bondage of the night into the liberty of eternal day. And thus, though the strife is dramatically set forth, and every stage is crowded with stirring and strenuous Will, though every cosmic force centres in a living conscious energy, — in Æons and emanations and spiritual powers, — and the speech of the whole is one mighty symbolism of spirit and matter, of the senses and the soul, still every step is predetermined, not by any monarchical scheme, but by the antagonisms and masteries of Nature. The light must free itself from the darkness, because each is what it is. No personal favoritism alters the course of Nature. According as each man is in relation to this supreme law of spiritual progress, so is his fate. This stands in place of election and reprobation; this, not the Bible or the Gospels, is the revelation; this, not the personal trinity in unity, is the witness of the spirit; this, not incarnation in a body of sense, is the presence of the Christ; this

doctrine, not his life or death, is the power of salvat.... All prophets and gods sink before this. Jahveh is degraded into the tempter of Adam, while the serpent becomes a saviour because he teaches the rights of knowledge above arbitrary commands, leading man into the liberty of the light instead of the bondage of the darkness. The visible Christ of tradition is a mere shadow; the true Christ was not crucified, because the spiritual light cannot, as a principle, be so confined and slain in forms of sense. The true Christ was sent at the beginning, to save the imprisoned light, and is invisibly crucified throughout Nature, so long as the light-principle is not set free. As for Ahura, Mani, though Mazdean in so many things, does not mention him as a sovereign Will, or hesitate to set aside his positive commands, — such as marriage, labor, agriculture, and, in general, reconcilement with the physical conditions of life.

It is then evident, that with all its errors Manichæism was a rationalistic criticism, cutting under church, creed, and established mediator; an attempt to substitute ideas (*gnosis*) for blind faith (*pistis*) and a religious philosophy for the worship of personal Will. This was equally true of Gnosticism in general, of which Manichæism was an offshoot, — the great heresy of the early Church, the noble witness that reason appeared with its radical claims at the very earliest steps of Christian absorption in the worship of Christ. But the Gnostics were never persecuted so fiercely as the disciples of Mani; partly because they affiliated more perfectly with existing mystical systems, Oriental and Platonic, from which they derived a certain prestige of respect; and partly because some of the doctrines of Mani, proceeding chiefly from contempt of the senses and of matter in general, were urged with a logical as well as a practical thoroughness which struck out the whole basis of Christian theology, especially the Incarnation and Atonement, from physical and social reality. Moreover,

other doctrines of Mani very conspicuously associated themselves with what had passed for heathen idolatry,—such as that of a spiritual presence and purifying function in the sun and moon.

A detailed study of Manichæism will show that, notwithstanding its important differences from Mazdeism as well as from Christianity, it was a natural product of those Iranian qualities which we have traced through the races and religions successively appearing on Iranian soil. Ideal aspiration was indeed much more characteristic of Manichæism than the worship of personal Will. Yet both these forms of Iranian nerve-energy had their share in its origin and history. Its recognition of ideal principles as the substance of belief was enfeebled by anthropomorphic elements, shared with both these religions, though by no means in equal degree on its part. Its superiority in the line of the ideal explains their evil treatment of it, while the modicum of personalism inseparable from its dramatic and poetic form assisted it to gain influence in an age which was drifting towards religious monarchism of a very positive kind. Of all heresiarchs, none perhaps stands more in need of just appreciation than Mani. His doctrine, a by-word in all Christian ages, has come down only in fragments and in the writings of his enemies, who took care to destroy the originals from which they quoted for purposes of confutation alone. Beausobre, the one great scholar of modern times who has ventured to deal with Manichæism in detail, was far from sympathizing with it; yet his minute researches resulted in finding Mani in almost every respect superior to his opponents, both Pagan and Christian. It is no slight honor to this despised and hated creed that it should have given occasion, after a thousand years' eclipse, for a work of such rare learning and liberality,[1] not only one of the best reha-

[1] Beausobre: *Histoire du Manichæisme.*

bilitations of discredited names, but a firm and fearless assertion of the rights of free inquiry. The estimate of Baur, though more philosophical, does not give so vivid an impression of the man or the system as this great and permanent contribution to the study of those times. To this I am indebted for a considerable portion of the data hereafter adduced in support of my own views on aspects of the subject into which Beausobre hardly enters, — its bearing on the progress of religion and the problem of evil.

As a recognition of the strife of contrary forces in the physical and moral spheres, Dualism may well be called a universal experience. Its symbols are everywhere, — God and Satan, Osiris and Typhon, Ahura and Ahriman, Jove and the Titans, spirit and matter, monad and dryad, order and chaos, "love and strife,"[1] affirmation and negation, polar forces, astrological oppositions, freedom and force, spiritual and sensual tendency. Diverse as are these forms, Dualism is nevertheless the promoter of pure monotheism, in proportion as it distinctly emphasizes the radical opposition of good and evil. For in the same proportion that it does this, it forces man to realize that supreme meaning which he attaches to the word *good*, which in the last analysis means that which is conformable to the truth of his being, and commands his love and service. In treating of the Dualism of the Avesta, I maintained that it was impossible for men to worship at once two equal and essentially hostile gods; in other words, that strict Dualism belongs to the realm of philosophy rather than to that of religion. In the religious sense, one cannot serve two opposite masters; "For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." There are of course incongruities in conduct and in belief everywhere; polytheism in a certain sense belongs to no

[1] Empedocles.

special creed or age. But in so far as evil is distinctly conceived as a power hostile to good, then, however it may be feared or detested, it is not worshipped as supreme; because as evil it cannot command either affection or respect. So, whatever the form under which good is conceived,—whether as truth, progress, righteousness, sacrifice, or some kind of happiness, — the idea of its right and ultimate destiny to be supreme, is made all the more evident, the more clearly the conception of evil is brought home, as its radical opposite and negative. When what is held to be good is felt to lie in the purpose of one power, and what is held to be evil in the purpose of another, then a dualistic philosophy necessitates monotheistic faith; or, in other words, the former must be superior and substantially supreme, and so God. Ahura was superior to Ahriman, though their strife lasted to the end of the present visible world. If here monotheism was not complete, it was because of the strictly personal meaning of deity, dividing the conception, so that an inferior person could be called a god as well as a supreme one. In a definition by principles, only the sovereign good in the universe can be called God.

In this respect Manichæism was more truly monotheistic than Mazdeism. Its supreme good was conceived as a principle of immaterial light, whereof all spiritual forces of good were emanations. This was "the Father;" Son and Spirit were inferior, divine only as partakers of this. But so entirely did it subordinate personality to essence, that the opposing power of evil, though regarded in the same way as a living agent, was defined as Matter; as if personification of a principle was, in this dramatic and poetic system, symbolical only, — as in the case of Matter it must be. The dualism here is not a division of deity into two persons, but a distinction of principles; only one of which is the supreme good, and therefore God.

But so absolute is this supremacy of good, that the very key to Manichæism is in its effort to avoid all intermixture of matter, or evil, with the nature of God as a pure and incorruptible essence, whose unity it was willing to express by the Christian name of "the Father." This effort is admitted by its enemies.[1] The Platonists, severe critics of the Manichæans, conceded that they had "invented their monstrous fables, which degrade deity, out of a religious reverence for God."[2] As it would have contradicted the absolute purity of good to create evil, therefore evil — which by a large part of the ancient world, Christian as well as Heathen,[3] was identified with matter — must be an uncreated, self-existent principle. This was Gnostic; Bardesanes, for instance, had said, "God creates the world, but evil creates itself." But the Christians, who felt the same instinctive sense of impurity in matter, made no such effort to save their God from the responsibility of having created it. Mani quoted against them on this point their own text, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," and Paul's doctrine of the irreconcilableness of the flesh with the spirit. He denied their explanation of the world as a creation out of nothing by the will of God; since "out of nothing, nothing can come." The world of light, or good, flows from the nature of God, which is light; but the world of darkness, or evil, can only flow from its own nature; hence both are uncreated; and the good is only good, and makes good only.

The reality of uncreated, self-existent principles was a common tenet in ancient philosophy, as distinguished from religion. Upon the same requirement, that nothing could come from nothing, the pre-Socratic philosophers of Greece held one and another of the four elements to be without

[1] Epiphanius, Jerome, etc. See Beausobre: *Hist. du Manichæisme*, ii. 147.
[2] Simplicius in Epictet. cap. xxvii.
[3] Sabellius and probably Arnobius believed this, as well as the Gnostics generally.

beginning, constituting the essential nature of things. So the "matter" of Plato, the "atoms" of Epicurus, the "strife and love" of Empedocles, the Hellenic "destiny" as well as the Gnostic "matter," were principles inherent and primal, beyond the will of the highest gods. And the "mind" (*nous*) of Anaxagoras was a principle rather than a definite person. In the same way Mani, urging the traditional belief that spiritual freedom consisted in emancipation from the bonds of sense, in an intensely ethical spirit affirmed the impossibility that matter should proceed from the supreme good either by creation or emanation, because it was the principle of evil. It was therefore out of jealousy for the purity of the religious ideal that he pronounced matter to be eternal, or uncreated, as to its substance, and its special forms to have been shaped by an inferior maker, or Demiurge, out of pre-existent materials. So Plato is at pains to show that evil does not come from the gods;[1] and is as little the work of man, since it was necessitated by a principle of disorder which the good Demiurge could not wholly overcome. The Platonic Demiurge represents the higher, as the Manichæan does the lower, creative force. It is not easy to see how, upon the recognized Christian as well as Gnostic ground that evil was real and positive, and that it was made effective through the solicitations of the senses, Mani could have so well recognized in any other way the logic of reason and the absolute purity of the highest good. Certainly not in the method of his great opponent, Augustine, the father of Christian theology, who says with Plato that nothing can be more detestable than to make God the author of evil; yet who, so far from freeing Him from personal responsibility for evil, ascribes it to the human will, whereof, as the bitter foe of Pelagianism, he declares God himself to be the absolute creator and con-

[1] *Republic.*

troller. Certainly not in the way of Christian theology, which made God the Creator and Father of all, yet cast the victims of these forces of evil, which are part and parcel of human life, into eternal punishment by the Father's will.

In resorting to the more consistent view of evil, considered as real and essential, that it must be thoroughly separated from the nature of God, and from the ultimate destiny of spiritual substance, Mani was the most thorough protestant against the irrationalities of the Christian creed in that whole line of heresiarchs who founded the Gnostic schools of the first three centuries. He followed out the same substantial ideas as Basilides, Marcion, Bardesanes, and Valentinus, and had many points of sympathy with those minor schools which formed the transition from Jewish Christianity to Gnosticism. In respect to the nature of evil and of matter, their errors are obvious.

As supplying a rationale (*gnosis*) of philosophy, to meet demands which the blind faith (*pistis*) of the Church not only failed to satisfy, but even treated as sinful, they occupy a position much higher than belongs to their solution of this and of many other problems of life. Augustine charges Mani with attempting to reach truth by reason without faith; and this, taking faith in Augustine's sense, is his real glory. The character of his criticism both of the creed and books of Christianity, of the Old Testament and the New, singularly anticipates many of the arguments against Biblical and doctrinal authority which modern science has carried into details then unattainable, and which modern rationalism has found most satisfactory in disproving the genuineness of certain books and the claims of internal evidence. His use of texts shows what opposite meanings may be read into the same words by a system of philosophy, and by a system of implicit faith; but it does not appear that the charge of

corrupting the language of Scripture has any other basis than his choice of those passages only which served his purpose of confutation or defence. His claim that reason was the emancipating power, that the strength of sin was in ignorance, that the power of Christ was in his doctrine, not in his life, — a purely spiritual reality not at all revealed in the illusory body of flesh and blood which men called Jesus, was a complete repudiation of the Christian doctrine of the Fall, of original sin, of compulsory belief through miracle, of exclusive incarnation, and of the whole scheme of salvation based thereon. And the inspiration of this whole effort to adjust the religious traditions of the East to the requirements of reason, was the desire to vindicate the ideal purity and perfection of the Supreme Good.

This is the substantial motive of his idea of a Demiurge, or subordinate creator, applied to Jahveh as the God of the Old Testament and framer of the material world. His objections to this Old Testament religion were based on its unworthy anthropomorphisms; on its bloody sacrifices, which he held to be of demonic origin; on its wholly temporal and visible meaning of reward and punishment; on its circumcision and ceremonialism; on the absence of all prophecy concerning the real Christ; on the absurdity of using its types as authority for belief in a divine commission; on the ground that a maker of visible light could not have been the Infinite God, because he would have been in darkness previous to making it. Faustus, the Manichæan apologist, could not believe that the Son of God should have been first and specially sent to the Jews; nor understand how the heathen should not believe that he had shown his grace to their own ancestors as well.[1] These objections to the anthropomorphism of the Old Testament are evidences of an earnest zeal for free spirituality

[1] Beausobre: *Hist. du Manichæisme*, i. 296.

and ethical purity in the conception of God,[1] similar to that which Alexandrian Judaism itself had contributed more than a hundred years before to the earliest Christian belief.

In the same interest of spiritualism Mani denied the resurrection of the body, — a heresy both to Mazdeism and Christianity; and it was for this, not for his Dualism, that he was put to death by Varahrân.

Let us now examine more closely the meaning of the Manichæan principle of evil. "Matter," it must be noted, is not here what the common speech, still less the science, of modern times calls by that name. It is simply a term for the substance of those forces which men found impossible to reconcile with their moral and spiritual ideal. It was in great degree identified with the bodily senses and their immediate relations to man, not only because of the sensual appetites, but in part certainly because it was recognized that the ideal world is not revealed physically, by observations, but transcendentally, from within; because the senses do not really account for the sense of duty and the idea of God. The inexplicable ground of physical and moral imperfection was conceived, with some approach to philosophical truth, as elementary disorder, blind chaotic darkness in contrast with the light of reason, order, truth, and good; which, according to Plato's noble maxim, was only suppressed by blindness, and only needed being seen, to be loved. This is substantially the "necessity" which Plato in his "Timæus" opposes to the principle of good, and which limits the power of the Demiurge to shape out of his pre-existent material an orderly world, and souls conformable to the best. It is a principle irreducible to permanent form, and necessitates evil in man and Nature, whose organisms spring from

[1] So in Alexandrian philosophy and the translation of the Septuagint a hundred years previous.

human degeneracy. This elementary darkness, or blind unreasoning capability of evil, was called "matter" by ancient thinkers,—Chaldean, Egyptian, Greek,—and forms a distinct factor in all their cosmogony and ethics. On this principle as inherent in the cosmos Mani took his stand in opposition to the Christian theory, which had made the Supreme Good responsible, as a personal Will, for moral evil, because defining it as a product of that human will which He had created. As a principle evil was eternally separate from the principle of good, and could not be explained by anything outside of itself, least of all by its moral opposite. Now, when modern thought says evil is a necessity, as the imperfection which is involved in the very nature of finiteness, and which no Will, however exalted, could prevent, or was needed to create; when it says creation proper, a pure beginning of principles in time, is contrary to the law of evolution, and, in truth, inconceivable, — what is it but to reaffirm that ancient doctrine of the "eternity of matter" under a scientific form?

The Manichæans criticised the first verse of Genesis by asking what God was doing before that "beginning" in which he created the heavens and the earth.[1] Some of the Fathers had enough of heathen philosophy in them to reply, — after Heraclitus and the Stoics, the Alexandrians and the Cabalists,—that the present system, terrestrial and celestial, was but one in a succession of systems; that God was eternally producing these; and they added, with less plausibility, that the world previous to this present world was a spiritual one, created by instant fiat, and that it was to this that Moses referred, as created "in the beginning." But it is obvious that this doctrine of successive creations was as far from giving the meaning of the verse in question, as it was from meeting the Manichæan objection to its theory of creation out of nothing. Nor was the

[1] Augustine: *Against the Manichæans*, i. 2.

matter improved by the further attempt of Augustine and Clement of Alexandria to read into the poetic phrase of Genesis their doctrine of the Trinity, by explaining ἐν ἀρχῇ ("in the beginning") to mean "by the principle," — that is, the "Word," or "Son of God"! [1]

It was natural for the orthodox advocate to ask how it was possible, if evil (or matter) was so wholly apart from the will of God, that he should exert any influence to redeem those under its power. But Mani could at least have replied that this was quite as conceivable as it was that the Christian God, being infinitely good, should have created matter, and its involved evil, by his perfect will. Moreover, the mingling of good and evil in the world was not an interfusion of principles at all, but a contact and external pressure, of the nature of two hostile and incompatible substances at war, — a mutual imprisonment, necessitating final separation and release.

In the dramatic spirit of their system the Manichæans personified their Evil Principle, as we have said. But their Prince of Darkness was not a form of rationality, for this belonged only to light; nor had he so much freedom and intelligence as Ahriman in the Mazdean system, who is outwitted by Ahura, and sees no danger till it is too late to escape; nor was he so genuinely personal as the Christian Satan, who prescribes the conditions of life and the fate of men by personal presence and direct volition. He is simply the poetic personification of that blind chaotic substance which needs no will to move it, but is itself active, productive, — a push and tendency of things. To give a soul to this element was quite according to Oriental psychology; since soul-life was traditionally conceived as of three orders, — rational, psychical, and animal or material, — and all the world as animated in every detail of element and form.[2] The Talmud also had its Prince of

[1] Beausobre: *Hist. du Manichæisme*, ii. 284. [2] Ibid., 369.

Matter, opposed to God. And the early Christians thought that in repelling matter they were fighting off the evil demons, who were its effective constituent force.

But there was a stronger reason for giving to the material principle opposed to good a soul, in Manichæan jealousy for the purity of the principle of good. If evil were wholly dead and impersonal, then, how account for its presence as conscious motive in the heart and will of man? It must have proceeded either from a spirit-capacity in matter, or else, which was impossible, from a capacity for evil in that spiritual principle which was held to be the Supreme Good. And so the dark world of the material principle must in a sense be spiritual, and productive of living forces, which people chaos and make war on the light. The opposite realms are in contact only at the border, and the dark world is at the south, as with the Orientals generally. Unlike their *being*, as opposites, which is eternal, their *strife*, the grand drama of which creation and human destiny are incidents, has a beginning in time, as it has an end. This tragedy is expressed by Mani, as by all religious teachers, in a mythic form, which must not be too literally interpreted.

In this mythus he is consistent with his Platonic idea of the origin of moral evil, not in inclination, but in ignorance; and vindicates the all-sufficiency of light (or reason) to deliver the soul. Like Basilides, and in accord with the Avestan Magi,[1] he ascribed the war to the effort of darkness to find light, led by a necessity to mingle with it. The darkness is not intentionally hostile to the light as light, but simply does not know the light. An internal schism, plainly suggesting the deeper Dualism in the bosom of evil which portends its destruction, caused it to transcend its own limits and overflow into the world of light, not from sympathy indeed, but from necessity, as the

[1] Beausobre, ii. 23. Archelaus: *Disputatio cum Manete*, c. 55.

only relief. I shall leave unanswered the natural question, How far does this doctrine involve what it certainly hints, — the psychological truth that evil, through its self-contradiction, comes to know the right, and sees it clearly, only after vainly struggling to overcome it?

Blindly flowing into the light, unable to hide from it, evil cannot refuse the conflict, whose sure issue is its defeat. Now, the very substance of the human — not the human body, which comes of dumb demons, according to Mani — is shaped from the substance of the Supreme Light, by what the myth calls the Mother of Life (in other words, the principle or power of life proceeding from it), purely to repel this flooding of its world by the darkness, this raid of chaos upon order, this blind push of lower tendency beyond its bounds. So exalted is the human in its ideal significance, in its nature and its purpose,—pure light-essence in finite form!

And when, in the unequal conflict, this finite image of God is like to fail, the Living Spirit is at hand with the boundless resources of the Father to rescue him. The demonic forces are subdued, and many of them bound in stars or in planets, the evil powers of Oriental cosmogony. Or does the choice of stars signify their imprisonment in *light?* — the sign of that crippled condition of evil in the world which constantly guarantees the final triumph of good.

All this is in the *ideal* world, not that of human history. The Mother of Life is the Wisdom (*Sophia*) of the Gnostics; but who, instead of falling like her from the bosom of God, an Æon wandering in the darkness, goes forth to resist the darkness, yet does not enter its impure domain. And her offspring, the ideal type of man (the *Adam-Kadmon* of the Cabala, *Gayômarḍ* of the Avesta), who contends with evil directly, is saved by the Living Spirit to the world of essential light. But now a portion of this divine humanity, made captive, is imprisoned in the lower

world, and pervades it, — the perpetual stress of the spirit therein towards deliverance into native light. This is the Son of Man, the "Jesus passibilis," of Manichæan Christianity; the free ideal of which, a portion (or child), is enthroned serene in the perfect visible light of the sun and moon, to draw all purified intelligences out of the world of evil into the gates of light. The Avestan Mithra becomes the Manichæan Christ.[1]

Now opens the proper history of man, — the sequel of a strife already substantially decided. Not a blind conflict of uncertain issue, not one fore-ordained by an arbitrary decree of Divine Will to be half deliverance and half doom, but a sublime foregone conclusion, based on the elements of being.

Out of the issues of that first hostile intermixture of good and evil, comes the visible actual world, — sun and moon from the elements purest from darkness; stars from those less pure; plants and inorganic substances from those still more corrupted; then Man, the actual human race, not the ideal, male and female, with body of darkness and soul of light, in whose composition centres that most pertinent question, Why was permitted such intermixture of evil in all we are and see? — and the Manichæan answer, namely, That something great and good should come of the inherent antagonism of good and evil in the nature of things. The natural enmity of matter to spirit should by their conjunction in man be made to work out the triumph of good. The dark powers, fearing to lose the captive light, form a body in the image of the ideal man, in which they imprison it, ignorant that in the very law of its nature it must struggle to escape these bonds, until darkness should be penetrated by order, and disciplines yield victory over the flesh. This is Adam the microcosmic man, — evil in body, good in soul.

[1] Neander: *Church History*, — "Mani and the Manicheans."

Thus did Manichæism follow out logically the doctrine of the impurity of the senses, deeply rooted in the religions of the time, not less in the Christian than in the heathen; not less in the call of the one to renounce a doomed world for the kingdom of God, than in the old philosophy of spirit and matter. Now, the significance of Judaism was, that it was the effort of the dark power concerned in creation to prevent man from escaping these material bonds: first, by forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge (and here he is saved by a good angel in the form of the serpent); and next by making him, through Eve, the subject of sexual concupiscence, that the element of light might by generation be divided and so impaired, and the memory of his original home in spiritual light be effaced. But this effacement was impossible, and the undying affinity forever prompts to freedom. This redeeming idea Mani did not, it is probable, develop into Platonic "reminiscence;" but the system seems to involve something like that principle of the immanent life of the ideal in man. Instead of the transmission of the sin of Adam as federal head of the human race, placing all under the ban of moral impotence, Mani seems to have asserted a power in each of his descendants to resist the ever-repeated first temptation, by virtue of the light-element which constitutes his spiritual nature. Thus the whole history of mankind before Jesus, became lighted up with personal sainthood; and in a larger sense than that of the Christian creed of redemption, the light shone from the East unto the West. Mani recognized the continual renewal of the holy flame through prophets in every age and religion, the greatest of whom he, as a Christian, of course found in Jesus Christ, but without regarding him at all in the Christian sense. Although the very genius of light, coming into the darkness from the heaven of the primal ideal Man, to teach men the way to the light, his work was not to bring any atoning or vicari-

ous salvation by his life or death, but simply to revive the forgotten light in darkened eyes, and show the science (*gnosis*) of deliverance from the snares of evil.[1] Here is a marvellous conjunction, — Buddha's "ignorance" as the root of misery, with the "light shining in darkness" of the Gospel of John.

This was a total rejection of the function of Christ in view of the Christian idea of the nature and consequences of sin; but there was even a more fatal heresy in the denial of the reality of his incarnation. For the pure light to assume a real fleshly body was impossible. The Manichæan Christ could neither eat, drink, suffer, nor die; the Jesus of the creed was therefore no incarnate God, but an illusory phantasm only; the work of the Christ was invisible and spiritual; and the "Jesus passibilis," or all-pervading light-element imprisoned in Nature, was an effort to escape matter, not an assumption of its forms.

To say the least, the Docetic Christ of Mani was not more irrational than the transmutation of the eucharistic elements into the actual flesh and blood of deity. Although he did not escape the absurd notion of a phantasmal organ proclaiming real and saving doctrine, and probably had no clear idea whether the miracles, sufferings, and other phenomena declared to be phantasmal were pure illusion, or whether, being objectively real, they were merely unreal as concerning the light-principle which could not take bodily form, — the meaning of Mani was evidently this: that as "flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God," nor the light-beam of the spirit be cut off from its fountain by absorption in matter, so the supposed incarnation in the person of Jesus was no exception to this law, and that the reality of Christ's coming to save men

[1] "Mani's world history, not Jewish nor Persian, but apparently Babylonian." — Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. p. 222.

was a fact of the invisible, spiritual world alone. This, notwithstanding all the ascetic extravagance we may find in its Christian premises, was at least sounder in its conclusion than the opposite extreme of faith, which broke away from that premise by an astounding form of miraculous personality, and announced this overwhelming exception to be the most supremely real thing in human history. Taking the Christian belief that the visible world was under doom of speedy destruction, and that the kingdom of its Christ was not of it, but of another world,—was not Mani right in counting it an illusion, and the coming of the Christ into subjection to its bonds the greatest illusion of all? The protest of Mani was at least timely as against those tendencies in Christianity towards a belief in the corporeality of God, of which the natural development led to the Christian doctrine of the Real Presence.

But he did not deny an *apparent* assumption of the flesh. He even found a purpose in the illusions, so far as he accepted them as historical; they represented, by way of figure, the relations and duties of those who really *were* bound in the flesh,—the crucifixion showing that man must mortify the body, the resurrection suggesting his immortality, and the ascension his return to his native light. But the Incarnation being denied, there could have been no miraculous birth of the man Jesus, and no resurrection of his physical body,—an evidence of the freedom with which the Christian records were read and criticised in the early centuries of the Church.[1] Faustus, the Manichæan bishop, deemed it the height of unreason that one born of a woman, circumcised as a Jew, baptized as a disciple, led into the desert to be tempted of the Devil in ordinary human ways, should yet be called the only be-

[1] Faustus, Augustine's opponent, denied the authenticity of many of the New Testament books, and referred them to a post-apostolic date. The main ground of the charge brought against their contents by this school, that they were corruptions of earlier writings, was their anthropomorphic character.

gotten Son of God, one with the Father, and Life of the World.[1]

The Manichæan Jesus was that portion of the light-substance of the ideal Man which had remained captive in the world of darkness, or matter, when that soul had been rescued by the Living Spirit and exalted to the sun. This was the "Jesus passibilis," pervading the visible world for the mystical imagination, with the presence of a divine endeavor to ascend out of the flesh into the spirit. "This Jesus," said the Manichæan, "was not crucified on Calvary; he hangs on every tree." In what manner he pervaded Nature does not seem clear, but doubtless invisibly only; and yet, as captive in matter, very differently from the free descent of the Son of Man from his Sun-world to bring his doctrine (or *gnosis*) in a merely apparent form of humanity. But the meaning is plain enough. Man's own ideal life, like the Fravashi of the Avesta, suffers and strives for and with him in every element of Nature, out of which he must wrest his lost liberty and light.

For emancipation was the recovery of a lost heaven, the reunion of the divine light in man with the supreme light, of which it came. This belief, common to all the ideal schools of antiquity and the mystics of all ages, is an expression of that cyclic movement ascribed by man to whatever he holds to be inherent and eternal. Principles, virtues, truth and good, tend through all changes of human experience to bring us back to themselves, and reaffirm for us in the end what they affirmed in the beginning, abiding as they have always been till the world comes round to them again. It is nothing less than a homelike sense of essential relation, of inmost affinity, of inalienable right to truth and good, which can thus absorb all distinctions of time, and make them appear at once as remembrance and prophecy, as what we were at the first and what we shall

[1] Beausobre, ii. 509.

be at the last. The ideal in man seeks only what belongs to it, its home, its nature, which it can never lose but by annihilation. The historical cyclic form assumed by this feeling, the sense of a lost heaven to be recovered, may be only a mythological symbol. But even an age which looks not backwards but forwards, and conceives of life purely as ascending evolution, will not escape this necessity of ideal aspiration to transcend all time-conceptions, — this sense of unchangeable identity with the principles which attract it as its own natural and only home. The dream of an ante-natal lapse from spiritual light, and a predestined recovery of the same, which haunted antiquity, was the measure of its loyalty to the ideal as inherent and eternal reality. Nothing can be more significant than the finding of this doctrine in dualistic schools like that of Mani, which held evil to be an eternal principle; a doctrine which at first sight seems almost pure pessimism. That it was as far as possible from this has already become apparent. For Mani, as for Plato, and for many of the Christian Fathers, immortality implied pre-existence, and pre-existence required immortality. The soul should recover the use of her wings, now folded and bound, and resume the lost power of flight. In ancient thought, the evil of matter was generally combined with the loss and recovery of spiritual wings. On the other hand, the doctrine of evil as inherent in the *spiritual* nature of man, tended to that of an entire destruction of these wings implied in the notion of eternal punishment, from which no scheme of redemption could save. Thus in the Christian dogma immortality lost its connection with pre-existence. It is remarkable that the two great advocates of pre-existence in early Christian history (Origen and Mani), both held to be heretics, though in different degrees, should, while differing strongly in general belief, both have insisted that immortality involved the restoration of every soul. It was

related of Mani that when his system was charged with cruelty in imprisoning souls in matter, he replied that all the lost sheep would be restored to their folds. "God forbid the soul should be lost. It is the lion that is taken in the net by the shepherd who has thrown him a sheep; as for the soul, God will preserve it."[1]

This illustration opens a curious chapter in religious history. There were other ways in which the delusion of a natural depravity of the senses delivered the Manichæans from irrational Christian dogmas, which are deserving of notice. They accepted the outer darkness and penal woes of the last judgment by fire, but denied the resurrection of the body and the millennial fictions of the Apocalypse and the Fathers. Even while clothing spirits in the splendors of the sun, they would have denied that these were in any sense material, or had any affinity with the flesh and blood in which these souls had dwelt while in life; thus leaving the whole question of spiritual form in the vagueness which properly belongs to it. They admitted that death was separation from the pleasures of sense, but for that very reason denied that it was a primal curse, or, in fact, anything but a deliverance and second birth. They allowed transmigration into plant and tree, and sun and moon, as a purifying process, but had no harrowing pictures of pits or lakes of fire for the wicked. They paid honors to the sun and moon, thus happily escaping the logical consequences of their hatred of matter, and erecting the noblest strictly material forms in the universe into symbols of the divine light.[2] But the idolatry of which the orthodox accused them on this account, even if real to some extent, was certainly not so pronounced as that which was embodied in the worship of the body of Christ, as such, or in that of the consecrated bread and wine

[1] Gregi: *Act. Disp.* See Beausobre, ii. 338.
[2] For other views of future punishment, see Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 195-232.

as its equivalent, or in that of the relics of saints and martyrs, through prayers, offerings, and vows. If idolatry it could be called, this solar cult was at least rational enough to take for its objects familiar blessings and natural laws. The Manichæans, however, repelled the charge. Faustus replied to his opponent, "God forbid I should blush for the reverence I pay to the divine luminaries. We have the same veneration for all elements which you have for the elements of the Eucharist."[1] The sun was, indeed, no less than the radiant company of purified souls, in the glow of their garment of praise, ascending to that "Pillar of Splendor" which was to be their eternal home. Origen regarded the heavenly bodies as living souls, shining in the light of good, and endowed with freedom of will, whereby they prayed to God through Christ.[2] But the Manichæans did not prostrate themselves before the sun, nor offer it sacrifices as to God. They did not fall into that image-worship which carried away the Church in the fourth century. They placed an empty seat in their halls of meeting in memory of their great teacher, but they did not invoke him. In their celebration of the Eucharist they used water instead of wine, and were regarded with horror by the orthodox for this cause.

As the union of spirit and matter in the nature of man involved a moral bondage of soul by sense, his sin, in the Manichæan mind, was a result of his nature rather than of his will. The orthodox attempt to reconcile these two almost incompatible grounds of sin by definitions which made them absolutely incompatible, — defining man's natural sin to be the organic, inevitable love of evil as evil and hate of good as good, and his voluntary sin to be the exercise of deliberate choice in being and doing what he had just been declared as being and doing under irresistible necessity, — was rejected by Mani. Human nature was

[1] Augustine: *Against Faustus*, xx. 1, 2.

[2] *De Principiis.*

far from being wholly depraved. Every soul was forever prompted to free itself from the desires of the flesh through its original participation in the divine light-nature of the "primitive Man," or ideal Humanity. This spiritual essence, shrouded in self-ignorance, cannot wholly forget itself; and the Manichæan could repeat Augustine's noble saying with a clearer right than its author: "Thou hast made us, O God, for thyself, and our souls are restless till they return to thee." For the great creed-maker of Christendom would fain have combined with this endless aspiration in the convert a moral and spiritual impotence which would have made conversion impossible. He professed to find in this morally impotent human nature the possibility of a yearning for Christ throughout all religions previous to his coming, which no rational logic could deduce from the premises. If the Church could hold to the existence of a conscience in face of its own theory of total depravity, surely Mani might maintain its authority in spite of his theory of man's structural relation to an ante-natal bondage to the Darkness.

We must guard against interpreting Mani as holding to the unrighteousness of matter in our own broad sense of that word. It is a proof of the simplistic notions of moral evil in his day, as well as of the predominance of one form of vice over others in the ancient world, that this system gives such emphasis to the sin of concupiscence, as if it were the only or the chief form in which the senses led mankind astray. This was the sin of the first parents. For Mani interpreted the Fall as of a nature which the Mosaic writer himself did not understand, because he wrote in the service of the Demiurge, not of the Supreme Father. The tree of knowledge was a figure of Christ as the true *gnosis;* the prohibition to eat of it came from the Prince of Darkness, who sought to keep man from the light; the serpent was a divine voice which thwarted the scheme.

Mani could not have failed to see that physical generation was indispensable to the continuance of the race. But existence in the body was in comparison with his essential ideal life a lapse and loss, since the soul was really super-sensuous. And in judging these now exploded theories of the ancients concerning the inherent impurity of the sensible world, it must be borne in mind that they did not imply the repudiation of all physical relations for all human beings, but the comparative imperfection of those who are involved in these relations. A secular world was recognized to be necessary, as well as a religious world; and since religion itself consisted in the struggle to throw off these implications, there could really be for man no religion without them. Buddhism had its place for the busy laity as well as for the absorbed saint; nay, distinguished itself more than any other ancient faith by the institution of practical good-will in visible earthly forms. Mani was no exception. Celibacy and ascetic restraint from property were in his system also only for those who had consecrated themselves to purely spiritual aims, the advanced believers, who saw and pursued the highest *gnosis*. It is not true that he forbade the social conditions to his converts generally, or that he believed society to be possible without sexual ties. It would be far less unjust to suppose that Jesus, when he called men to leave all and follow him, to divide their goods, and shake off the dust of a world of flesh and blood that could not inherit his kingdom, sought to abolish homes, trades, government, and society itself. For Jesus really seems to have regarded the visible world as on the verge of destruction, and the judgment day close at hand. Jesus preached a practical love quite as hard to reconcile with his condemnation of the visible world, as a full acceptance of secular and social interests upon lower planes would be with Mani's contempt of matter as impure. Even Plato treats the love

of the sexes as evil; his ideal citizens of a republic, male and female, are not allowed voluntary unions, but solely under laws executed by public officials for the public benefit.

It is the pride of modern thought to have rehabilitated the material form in which all human experience must find its expression. The boundless physical and social opportunity, the breadth and complexity of human relations, have immeasurably increased the estimate of what the senses are, and can do for man. Not even the authority of the New Testament can commend the old negations to the lips of modern Christians. But the old religions had to take the world as it was in their day. That ideal capacity which makes religions did not denounce the world which we now see; it rather asserted one quite contrary to the world which it saw, and which could neither receive nor contain its own world. Its necessity was to overcome this world, either by living above it in ascetic separation, or by expecting its supersedure by the higher life of the spirit. It struggled against the bonds of the organism whence brutal possibilities seemed to flow. It was because the sense-world is omnipresent that it seemed to stand so obstinately in the way of the perfection that the eye never saw nor the ear heard. It was the heart of Plato's creed that so long as beauty and truth were seen only in their embodied forms, however high these might be, the soul of beauty, by and through which they were beautiful or true, was not perceived. Not the concrete body but the universal principle was divine. Yet Plato could see that to one who had perception of eternal archetypal ideas, the world would become their divine expression. Philo, again, the Platonizing Jew of Alexandria, was looking only at the power of bodily seductions to blind the soul to ideas, when he said, "Matter plots against the soul, lifeless and dead as it is. For when the

mind is busied on sublime contemplation, it judges the body to be a hostile and evil thing; for the soul of the athlete and the soul of the philosopher differ."[1] "The body," says the Book of Wisdom, "weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things." "There is a law in my members," said Paul, "that wars against the law of my mind." It was certainly natural that the devotee of ideal virtue and knowledge, in ancient times, should dwell much upon the distractions and perplexities woven about him by the actual world, — material, social, political, institutional. "Invincibly urged to believe in justice, and cast into a world which is injustice itself, needing eternity to vindicate its dealings, and sharply arrested by the chasm of death, — what," says Renan, "would you have him do?" In the absence of those practical resources which science has developed in every human relation, the noblest emotions required something more than a foothold in the supersensual world, — even an attraction to the claims and interests of that world amounting to repulsion from all physical limitations.

What has most contributed to the ennobling of the senses, the rehabilitation of matter in modern times, is the scientific discovery that all thought is so closely related to the action of the senses and the brain that the old line between matter and spirit as distinct worlds is effaced, and we are open to the conviction that we cannot honor any form of virtue or truth without reverence for those physical conditions and laws by which alone it can become effectual for good. Therefore it is evident that the words "body" and "matter" could only have been used in the older systems to cover a much narrower ground of cosmic meaning than with us. And it will be found, curiously enough, that those who were most hostile to matter treated the most important material forms with veneration; as the

[1] *Philosophical Allegory of the Sacred Laws*, bk. iii. 22.

Manichæans did the sun and moon, and as the Christians did the reality of Christ's flesh and blood, the resurrection of the Body, and the Millennial Kingdom with its visionary mixture of physical elements with supernatural and impossible conditions, which involved no less than the destruction of the world. Even the crown of Christian thought, the Gospel of John, did but modify this curious discrepancy; since it resorted to the physical world for its whole symbolism of the descent of the Logos as Light into the Darkness of the Flesh, wherein even "its own" could not comprehend it. And even such men as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, who were hostile to the materialism of the Apocalypse, did not rise above this inconsistent delight in sensuous images of ideal truths. With a few marvellous exceptions like the poet-prophet of science Lucretius, the thinkers of that earnest time believed the material world to be at war with the highest aims of man; while yet every one of them employed the material world as symbol, allegory, parable, or apologue, to express his highest thought. These facts are sufficient to warn us against giving too literal or too modern an interpretation to the old Dualism of spirit and matter; so that it might almost seem reasonable to substitute such other terms for these as active and passive, higher and lower, living and dead, perfect and imperfect.

But we should especially err, if we regard Dualism as atheism. To assume the reality of an eternal, uncreated principle of matter outside of God, while yet finding a basis for aspiration and duty in a supreme principle of good, was not to deny, so much as to affirm, God. And however limited the conception of deity which was not inclusive of matter, it could hardly be more so than that intense monotheism of Judaism and Christianity which surrounded a supreme personal Will with finite conditions and anthropomorphic defects.

The charge of immorality brought by Augustine and other Church Fathers against the Manichæans is not likely to be admitted by any candid student who is familiar with the mode of dealing with heretics adopted by the great apologists for Christianity. The confutation of heresies by Irenæus and Origen rested upon the assumption that the denial of orthodoxy inevitably led to immorality. Even the doctrines of opponents were invariably ascribed to the worst motives, and presented as unfavorably as possible. It is always natural for religious dogmatism to infer immoral results from the rejection of opinions which the critic has come to regard as the foundation of his own virtue and peace. The accusations brought by Cyril and Augustine against the Manichæans were in accordance with this traditional method. They were the more improbable from the fact that the hostility of this sect to the material world led naturally to the suppression of every sensual tendency. On the other hand, it is possible that the Gnostic conceit of being the elect among believers might lead in some instances to fanatical perversion of the text, "to the pure all things are pure." But the danger was quite as great in the similar conceit of the orthodox, whose morals, if we may judge from the admonitions and reproofs of the chief apostles, had also their perverted leaven in the abuse of church membership for vanity and vice. Augustine, who is the principal witness in proof of the practice of horrible and obscene rites in the meetings of the Manichæans, continued to be a hearer in the sect for nine years. He admits that they earnestly exhorted their disciples to guard against sensuality, and that he himself, loving pleasures of this kind, was not willing to become anything more than a hearer, through fear of binding himself to purity by their vows of membership. Nor does he anywhere pretend that they had secret rites, though he brought everything he could against them

in his letter to induce a friend to leave them for the Christian communion. Cyril, who makes similar charges, was the most unscrupulously intolerant of Christian priests. Foolish and incredible maxims were ascribed to Mani; and Augustine's preposterous charge that he imagined almsgiving and other acts of humanity to be sacrifices to demons, is answered by his letter to Marcellus, which begins with praising this person for his charity.[1] Almsgiving seems to have been the duty of the Manichæan laity to their ascetic devotees, who, like the Buddhist bonzes, lived on pious gifts, after the apostolic ideal, or according to the teaching of Jesus, to be without thought for the morrow, like the birds of the air or the flowers of the field. The vows of the elect were at least ethically creditable. They were: (1) Of the mouth,—not to eat forbidden food, nor utter anything untrue, unkind, or base; (2) Of the hands,—to be pure from all violence or crime; (3) Of the bosom,—to keep out all evil thoughts.[2] Was not this the old Avestan formula,—"purity of thought, word, and deed"? According to Clement of Alexandria, who is not friendly to them, their principal precept was self-respect.[3] Libanius commended them to the governor of Palestine, as a people who mortified the flesh and regarded death as a release; who harmed none, yet were everywhere harassed and persecuted. They are reported by some to have thought war indefensible, and music a gift from Heaven. Their hymns, which were called lascivious and polytheistic by their opponents, seem to have been descriptive of Paradise and of divine Æons, of the mystical union of believers with Christ, and contained such imagery of devotion as was familiar to religious feeling in

[1] Archelaus: *Disputatio cum Manete*, 5. This work is of uncertain historic value, but very ancient; and at least shows what was thought of Mani at a period much earlier than Augustine.

[2] Beausobre: *Hist. du Manichæisme*, ii. 791.

[3] Stromata, ii. 20.

their time.[1] In turn they charged the orthodox with having reinstated pagan sacrifices in their love-feasts (*agapæ*), idolatry in their service of martyrs, and the heathen calendar in their festival-days; and even with having retained the morals of the heathen unchanged. As for the charge of polytheism, they might have retorted that the angelology of the Christians was essentially similar to their own, quite as complicated a system of guardian spirits to be invoked, consecrating every object in Nature or art, presiding over nations and cities, a host of saints and martyrs lifted into thrones, and served with sacrifice and vow. In truth, both systems were natural developments of the old Persian mythology, — the one on Jewish, the other on heathen ground. As for demonology, the dualist's belief in an essential principle of evil was not more prolific of satanic powers than the Christianity of the New Testament and the whole Church of the first five centuries, in which the doctrine of demons ruled without an exception among its greatest names.

Here is the reply of a Manichæan bishop to Augustine's invective: —

"You ask if I receive the gospel. Is that a question to ask a man who observes all its commands? It is I who should ask you if you receive the gospel, since you show no signs of receiving it effectually. I have left father, mother, children. I have renounced all that the gospel commands me to renounce, and you ask if I receive the gospel. I see that you do not know in what the gospel consists. I have renounced gold and silver. I am content each day with the food sufficient for it. I am not anxious about to-morrow's clothing. You see in me those beatitudes which comprehend the gospel. You see me poor, meek, peaceful, of pure heart. You see me suffering persecution for righteousness' sake. Yet you doubt if I receive the gospel.

[1] The song of St. Thomas, on the marriage of the Church with Christ, has been supposed to be of Manichæan origin, substituting divine for earthly nuptials, after the manner of the Solomonic Canticles of the Old Testament. Other similar productions mentioned by Augustine (*Against Faustus*) have been traced to the same source, but without certainty. See Fabricius, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*.

You charge me with pagan idolatry. Pagans worship by temples, images, altars, victims, perfumes. I do otherwise: and I have a different opinion of the service agreeable to God. I myself, if I am worthy of it, am the rational temple of the Divinity; Jesus Christ is the living image of his living majesty. A wise soul is the truth, is his altar. And true sacrifice is pure and simple prayer."[1]

Here is the Manichee's ethical ideal, comparing favorably enough with the best claims of his opponents. It would hardly have found its way down to us through the writings of an antagonist, had it not sufficient foundation in history to deserve our credence.

The two main charges against Manichæism were *Magic* and *Gnosticism*. The first associated it with Persian origins, the second with Egyptian and Greek. With the growth of orthodoxy, and the conflicts of nascent Christianity with the other religions of the world, the old sympathy for Persia, naïvely hinted in the story of the Magi bringing their willing gifts to the infant Christ, became transformed into dislike, and the name of Magi, standing for the Dualism of the East, was chiefly known through its derivative, *magic*, the art of controlling invisible powers to forbidden ends. Mani was by origin and training a Magus; but only in this fact was there any color in the charge brought against him of magical practices. The word *magic* has in fact a nobler meaning and descent. The Greeks ascribed it to Zoroaster and his priests, and held it in profound respect. Pliny says the Magus Osthanes, who accompanied Xerxes, "inspired the Greeks with a rage for the art of magic; and that in the most ancient times, and indeed almost invariably, men sought in it the highest renown."[2] "What crime," asks Apuleius, "in being a Magus (or priest) and knowing ceremonial laws and rites?"[3] Pythagoras, Democritus, Empedocles, and

[1] Faustus (*apud Augustinum*, v. ii.) [2] *Natural History*, bk. xxx. chap. 2.
[3] *Apologia*, 1.

Plato crossed the seas to learn it, and returning home expatiated upon it as "one of their grandest mysteries."[1] Apollonius Tyanæus called Persia the land of wisdom, and sought the Magi as its exponents.[2] Originally the word magic seems to have been used to designate religious functions, independently of all secret or dangerous arts. Persian Magianism meant that or something even higher. Suidas says that philosophers and lovers of God are called Magi among the Persians. Ammianus calls Magic the purest worship of divine things. Diogenes Laertius quotes authors who place the Magi as fathers of ancient philosophy, Hindu and Jewish, and ascribes to them exalted attainments.[3] It is curious that he adduces Aristotle in proof that they were ignorant of all kinds of divination by magic.[4] Dio Chrysostom says those whom the Persians call Magi were the persons most fitted by nature for truth and for religious wisdom.[5] Philo Judæus also describes their love of investigation; calls them "a numerous body of virtuous and honorable men;" and adds that "whoever is virtuous is free."

It is evident that in the various phases of meaning undergone by this word, we have a confession of the great indebtedness of the Greek and Roman mind to Asiatic culture, and a reflection of complete changes in the sense of relationship to it produced by religious hostilities. When we contrast the respect with which the Greek writers speak of the wisdom of the Magi, and the willingness of Pliny to collect the results of their physical speculations and prescriptions of occult powers in herbs and stones, with the discredit ecclesiastically attached to the name of Zoroaster through the Middle Ages, as prime teacher of whatever secret mastery over natural powers had been either achieved

[1] Pliny: *Natural History*, xxx. 1.
[2] Ibid., xxxiv. 17.
[3] Diogenes Laertius: *Lives of Philosophers*, Introduction.
[4] Ibid.
[5] *Oratio Borysthenitica*.

or pretended to, and which was persecuted by the Church as the work of the Devil down to the time when the first essays of modern free physical inquiry were crushed out, so far as possible, under the name of Magic or the "Black Art,"—we obtain some conception of the power of special religious interests to pervert the historic relations and obligations of the race. But it is important to observe that this narrowness of a special religion does not prevent the laws of continuous evolution from pursuing their way across its exceptional claims, in spite of every such denial of its share in the delusions of the past. In this point of view the relations of Christianity to what it called the Zoroastrian Magic of Manichæism are deserving of study.

There was certainly ample foundation in the demonic world of the Avesta, and the incantations and sorceries to which the Mazdean priests were led by their dualistic experience, for the general belief of the Christian world in the Persian origin of magic in this inferior sense. The invisible realm of powers inferior or hostile to God was, however, just as real to the Christian believer in the mystical powers of the name and cross of One who came to conquer Satan and his hosts, and who had driven devils out of men into swine, as it was to the Zoroastrian, who met the hosts of Ahriman at every turn, and used against them the holy Honover or the staff of power. The pseudo-science of controlling demons is but the untaught effort to resist threatening forces in Nature, conceived under human analogies, and requires quite other than religious influences to emancipate it into positive knowledge and mastery of things. It was as real to Origen as to Jamblichus or to Mani, or to the Chaldean diviners of the Roman empire. It was real to Jesus and his apostles, and to the whole early Church. It was not any special propensity in the Persian Magus to the use of occult powers to evil ends that moved the hatred of the Christian Church to him;

not his mere belief in demonic possession or demonic function in the government of this world, — it believed in these as firmly as he,—but his interference with the exclusive claim of its own God and Saviour. His rival God and creed in whose interest his war against demons was waged was a pretension which made his angels and demons alike detestable. The only difference between the magic practised by the Church and that which it held blasphemous in the pagan or heretic was that the power which both sides claimed to have acquired over the elemental world, was exercised by the one through talismans, relics, holy formulas, and symbols centring in the orthodox Christ, and by the other through analogous instrumentalities centring in a false or heretical system. As the Manichæan inherited from Mazdeism the belief that everything in Nature and human life had its guardian spirit and its ensnaring demon, so the Christian inherited a similar conception from the Judaism which had drunk deeply at Persian springs, and in the time of Christ had a demonology far more minute and elaborate than the Avesta itself.[1] With that control over the spirits good or evil in which magic consisted, Monotheism was, in fact, far more in accordance than Dualism, since it brought the natural and supernatural worlds into closer relation through a common origin and dependence. The Sibylline oracles, falsely ascribed to early heathen prophetesses inspired to testify in the interest of the Jewish and Christian religions, but belonging to the centuries immediately before and after Christ, abound in evidence of the strength of this element in both religions. The Apocalypse of John, pervaded by the magic of numbers, of satanic and guardian powers, possession and exorcism, ministering spirits of all kinds subject to faith, brings Christian Testament and Jewish Talmud to one plane. Every one of

[1] *Supernatural Religion*, pt. i. chap. iv.

the Church Fathers accepted in substance the data of magic. Those diabolic powers, which they held to be in special collusion with the heathen, they never thought of denying as unreal, but lifted them into their mythological series, associating them with the Fall of man and the bad giants of the elder world. The witchcraft delusion of the whole Church down to recent times, the mediæval mania for transactions with Satan about the soul, were but the mighty survival of that early Christianity which down to the tenth century believed that a grand transaction of Christ with Satan, wherein the latter was tricked by the former out of his real property in the soul of man, constituted the substance of the Atonement. All gifts of healing and of tongues, by which sinners and heathen were converted, all miraculous deliverances from evil, all vows to guardian saints and angels, were so many occult powers of good to control the evil ones which swarmed everywhere under the direct command of the Prince of Darkness, throughout the depraved world of matter and mind. It is true that with the Christian or Jew, one God had created both good and evil, while with the Manichæan, evil was uncreated, and a principle essentially different from good; but this distinction, which might be expected to give to Christian supernaturalism a better hope of converting the powers of evil, and so inspire its magic with a nobler spirit, produced no such effect. The Mazdean looked for the final conversion of demons; the Manichæan, for something very like their annihilation, leaving a barren principle of darkness only; the Christian was satisfied only with their eternal misery.

It must also be observed that Manichæism in reality rejected from the three religions from which it was in large degree derived a considerable amount of material for magic. It discarded many of the superstitions of implicit faith. By its comparative freedom from mysticism

it avoided the gulf of thaumaturgy, into which Neoplatonism at last fell. Its substitution of reason for revelation, its aim at an intellectual elevation above physical miracles, its repulsion of all contact with evil, or matter, as a principle eternally separate from spirit, were of themselves tendencies hostile to the coarse passion for wonder-working so prevalent in the early Christian ages. It was on these very grounds that Mani was persecuted by the great religions out of which he had gathered so much for his own. He became the victim of Sassanide intolerance because he denied that typical form of magic on which Zoroastrian rites were founded, — the resurrection of the body; and his followers were everywhere hunted down by the Christians, because they would not believe the Supreme God to have been born of a virgin and imprisoned in a body of real flesh and blood. Yet because he could not fully emancipate himself from the Christian tradition and creed, he sought to reconcile them with his loftier conception of the Infinite by the only possible theory, that of Docetism; and Docetism — the theory that a spiritual essence could take a purely illusory bodily shape, and deceive the eyes of men by phantom images of a great life and death — was to accept the doctrine of magic in one form at least, and that the completest.

Notwithstanding this common ground of Christian and Heathen in the conception of angelic and demonic powers, the earliest recorded hate of the apostles of Christ was directed against the great representative of thaumaturgy in their vicinity, — Simon of Gitton, otherwise called "Simon Magus." His pretences to exercise magical powers over Nature apart from the name and following of Jesus so stirred the Christian imagination of the first four centuries that he became a gigantic nebulosity of legend. He was a master of magic powers,[1] the favorite of de-

[1] See especially the *Clementine Recognitions*, ii. 9.

mons, and instigated by them to proclaim himself a god. He succeeded in causing himself to be "worshipped as the first god," and "in persuading men that he should never die."[1] He caused himself to be buried alive, in expectation that he would rise on the third day.[2] He was the founder and father of all the great heretical schools which went under the name of Gnostics.[3] He was the teacher of every kind of vice. He was the pest of mankind, and his godhood was dethroned by Peter at Rome.[4] The doctrines of this theological monster, if we may form a judgment from the confused exposition of his "gospel" by Irenæus and Hippolytus, neither of whom seems to have had either the disposition or the power to unfold its meaning, contained nothing to justify all this denunciation. It must have been an evolution of psychological attributes from the idea of God conceived as the immutable, eternal, yet forever self-projecting reality;[5] and this dramatically and allegorically presented as a descending series, ending in the latest revelation, through himself, for making the universe one in God and emancipating the human soul from material bonds. He was eclectic, and held heathen teaching to be sufficient without Christ, if rightly understood.[6] Of any dualistic theory, or special demonic system, even his enemies seem to have brought no charge; but every feature of later Gnosticism, Demiurgism, and Docetism especially, was seen reflected in its germs in the Samaritan Antichrist, whose chief sins seem to have been, "interpreting the books of Moses as he pleased,"[7] and usurping the place of Jesus as image of God.[8] The sin of Simon is

[1] This charge of claiming to be God is elaborated in the pseudo *Clementine Recognitions*, a romance of the third century, bk. ii. Justin Martyr: *Apology*, i. 26, 56. Origen: *Philosophy*, vi. 1.

[2] Hippolytus: *Philosophy*, vi. 1.

[3] Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, bk. i. Eusebius: *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 13.

[4] Eusebius, ii. 13, 14.

[5] Hippolytus: *Philosophy*, vi. 1, 17.

[6] Matter: *Histoire critique du Gnosticisme*, ii. iii.

[7] Hippolytus: *Philosophy*, vi. v. 19.

[8] Irenæus, i. 23.

not apparent to critical study. To the eyes of Paul and Peter, according to the Book of Acts, it consisted in conceiving the power of Christ as working miracles through them for mercenary motives; and in mistaking their gift of healing for a magic secret which he wanted to buy. But the story refutes itself. Simon could have seen no miracle wrought by the apostles; and if he saw anything which they claimed to be miraculous, it could only have been something akin to magical illusion, and involves them in the very delusion they would fasten upon him. His doctrine of a fallen Æon whom his ministry was to restore to the Pleroma of God, and in her the world, led to the story of his leading about a reformed prostitute, — according to some, far from reformed, — whom he styled "the lost sheep;"[1] and still further, to charges of licentiousness against his whole school.[2] Yet it was conceded that Simon had redeemed this Helena from slavery.[3] To take her with him as a type of that divine power which he wished to deliver in every soul, might be the act of a lunatic in our days, but certainly no more implied improper relations than did similar typical actions recorded of the Hebrew prophets; and her presence might have served to emphasize his doctrine and to illustrate its practical power over conduct. If, as the Fathers assert, it was his purpose to counterfeit or rival Jesus, he could point to a prototype, beyond all suspicion of guilt, in the female friend out of whom the Messiah had cast seven devils, and who loved to sit at his feet. Nor was any type of sin and recovery more frequently employed in those days than the sexual one. It was an "adulterous and sinful generation," which the Messiah was to redeem.

Whether Simon's thaumaturgic gifts were exercised, if he possessed them, in the interest of his own claims to be

[1] Hippolytus: *Philosophy*, vi. 1, 19. Irenæus, i. 23. Matthew, xviii. 12.
[2] Hippolytus: *Philosophy*, vi. 1, 19. [3] Irenæus, i. 23.

the Paraclete or Advocate, or in some other way the power of God, may be difficult to determine. But the evidence of his imposture comes entirely from his enemies; and there seems to be no more reason for crediting it than for regarding the whole great Gnostic movement of the first four centuries as imposture, as the same writers would have us believe that it was. Whatever motives his religious claim may have supplied, they were not necessarily selfish ones, any more than those which are represented as actuating the apostles of the Book of Acts. Their magic was of a character similar to his, — it was a means of proving supernatural gifts as the prerogative of believers in Christ. But the magic of the Gnostics generally, and of Mani in particular, was a part of their psychological symbolism; it ascribed to certain elements in Nature constant virtues and vices as inherent in their being, according to that essential Dualism which was the law of the universe. It was therefore of the nature of science as much as of superstition; or rather it was incipient science in the leading-strings of superstition.

In this point of view it was the precursor of that "magic" which enclosed the germs of modern science during the Middle Ages, — that original study of physical Nature which was persecuted by the Church because it foreshadowed some other solution of the problems of life, some other salvation for the mind of man, than the Christian Trinity and Atonement. It is true that in common with the Church, Manichæism had rejected the material world; not, however, as under the curse of God, but as proceeding from a principle antagonistic to God. But it had at least subordinated arbitrary will to positive principles and laws, and sought to test the books and traditions of religious belief by them, in the name of reason. And it was in a similar though more consistent spirit that the fathers of modern science faced the curse that "revealed

religion" laid upon Nature, and with earnest faith in freedom and in law strove to rehabilitate man's dwelling-place, as the Manichæans had sought to deanthropomorphize God. This was the forbidden magic with which they confronted the magic, or miracle, of papal consecrations and holy signs and talismans, which for centuries gathered about the pious trust and daily life of men. As the Gnostic traced his hierarchy of psychological Æons from the highest spirit down to the lowest emanation, and made religion consist in the restoration of their unity in God, so these new Gnostics of Nature carried the purpose a step farther, and strove to bring about the unity of the physical and spiritual cosmos, as the Gnostic had done with the spiritual alone. Astrology and alchemy — the magic, not of stars and metals only, but of all elements — were inspired by the idea that all things are in natural sympathetic relation, — from the atom to the perfect soul; that lines of dynamic influence are traceable through correspondent forms, and that the power to bring forth ideal fruits from these hitherto unexplored relations was to be secured by the right knowledge of their inherent laws and unselfish obedience to their commands. Ignorant as children, they took fanciful resemblances for real relations; but they anticipated many scientific truths, and were led by that first condition of science, — the instinct of the permanent and universal. The instant this trust in Nature as the great teacher appeared, it was treated by the Church as an alien and rival authority; and for this reason, — the Church rested upon exclusive Will; science rested upon positive natural law. The supernatural magic of the Church aimed at the destruction of the natural magic of the scientist, as it had a thousand years before at the natural magic of the heretic and heathen, who put their thaumaturgy against its miracles; and so the birthday of our liberty saw the martyrdom of its prophets as masters of the "Black

Art." But persecuted "magic" has evolved modern science, and science has in turn exorcised the Church. It is noticeable, therefore, that in this hated name of magic, preserving the memory of Zoroaster and his priesthood, has descended a flame of freedom which the Aryan kindled, three thousand years ago, on the heights of Iran, for his struggle against the powers of darkness in the name of Ahura, the self-created light. The word acquired a nobler meaning with time. The darkness which the mediæval Magus had to master was ignorance, ecclesiasticism, a theology of arbitrary will and slavish fear. The Dualism of the Persian is lost in a strife of powers deeper than that which divided Ormuzd from Ahriman, or the believer in two hostile principles from the believer in one All-creating God.

A modern writer,[1] using the word in its supernatural sense, regards magic as a result of Dualism. If he is right, it cannot be that the Dualism from which magic results is a belief in two gods instead of one; but rather some such recognition of the power of evil in life and the world as belonged to Christian monotheism in common with what is commonly supposed to have been Dualism proper,—the religion of the Avesta. Christianity, in its conception of evil, simply put God and Lucifer for Ahura and Ahriman. But it did not merely inherit that conception from Persia, — it seized and developed it. The implication of Ahriman in creation was more than equalled by the master-stroke of Satan in effecting the full surrender of mankind through Adam's fall to a metaphysical hatred of good far beyond the simple ethical conceptions of the Avesta. This monotheistic Dualism extended the sovereignty of evil into eternal relations, making hell a positive permanent fact, which the Avesta did not do. The New Testament really gives more scope to the Prince of Darkness than the Bundehesh.

[1] Rydberg: *Magic of Middle Ages.*

The Church of One God was more dualistic than the doctrine of Two Principles. It believed in the existence of the "father of lies and the founder of oracles" as absolutely as in that of the Father of Jesus. Early Christianity regarded the whole heathen world as diabolic. Catholics added all heretics to the category, and the female sex in special, burning millions at the stake for sorcery. The Reformers added all past Catholicism to the list; and Luther, who had the sharpest eyes for devils of any man in his day, held the Church, as an institution, to have been an invention of Satan. So that a monotheistic religion has actually made the whole history of man a diabolic drama,[1] which the Incarnation alone illumines with its Divine interference. Scarcely a voice was raised in orthodox Christendom for centuries against those horrible practical deductions from the dogma of depravity and the power of Satan over Nature and man which were bathing all Europe in innocent blood. It cannot be pretended that Dualism proper, according to the common meaning of that term, is more guilty than monotheism of the barbarous forms of belief in magic as the instrument of evil. Nothing could more clearly show that man's treatment of the problem of moral evil is independent of the lines which separate positive religions, than to compare the superstitious precepts and customs prevailing in mediæval Christianity on this subject, — the omens and precautions and anathemas relating to witchcraft and sorcery, with those of a similar nature in the Avesta. It would be found that the former list largely outnumbers the latter, and reaches through the details of life with at least equal thoroughness.[2] The popular notion that heathenism is responsible for Christian magic is therefore an error.

The Christian sense of the power of evil, like the Christian doctrine of eternal punishment, was in fact the recoil

[1] Rydberg: *Magic of Middle Ages*, p. 198. [2] Ibid., 210, 211.

of man's conscience from nature in himself and the world, which in Christianity took the form of self-contempt and self-rejection, which turned the back upon the whole past of human progress, and laid the whole burden of human misery on the constitution of Nature and the soul; whose great interpreter for ages has been that strange compend of the savage and the saint, that child of African passion and Roman legalism, — Augustine.

The historical development of Dualism under the monotheistic system of Christianity deserves closer treatment. Under this system, evil is either directly the result of God's will, — that is, He is alike the creator of good and evil; or else indirectly, — that is, through the free will which he has bestowed on man, with full knowledge of the consequences of the gift. The former of these solutions was derived from Judaism, which had imbibed from Mazdeism in the Captivity the distinct personality of an adversary, — Satan, as the inciter to wickedness, appearing for the first time in the post-exilian Book of Chronicles.[1] The growth of Jewish demonology was extremely rapid; and its fallen angels, its swarming devils, its hierarchy of evil powers, pervading the worship of Jahveh, went over bodily into Christianity, which was really but a reform in the bosom of Judaism, working over its higher and lower elements in the interest of individuality and ethical purity. It ascribed to Satan, the roaring lion, the father of lies, all diseases of mind and body, all heathen dogmas, rites, and conduct. If, as many modern Christians suppose, Jesus did not believe in such a personal enemy to God and good, why the repeated allusion to him, in the Temptation, and in the expulsion of demons, while Jesus is nowhere presented as rebuking the almost universal belief of his countrymen in such a power? What idea Jesus had of his origin or of the extent of his power nowhere appears, except that he

[1] 1 Chronicles, xxi. Compare 2 Kings, xxiv.

believed him subject to the power of God, and through God to his own. But Paul distinctly adheres to the old Jewish idea that Jahveh is the creator of evil in man, as the potter moulds his clay.[1] The Christian Fathers had the harder task of reconciling their Christian monotheism with the existence of this inconvertible evil Will, whose power over man was due to a corresponding tendency in the will of man. In Satan and in man evil was traceable, not to the will of God, but to disobedience and revolt in their own wills; as, however, they were created and endowed by the omniscience of God, evil was indirectly his work. Lactantius in the fourth century, in fact, speaks of God as creating two spirits, — one that should hold to good, and one that should fall and become evil;[2] showing that Christian monotheism moved in the same track with Persian Dualism. And this was the primitive doctrine which went on demonizing the creed and conduct of the Middle Ages, overturning all reason by the internecine conflict of God and the Devil. Hermogenes, a Christian Father in the second century, who anticipated Mani, making matter eternal and the source of evil, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, who did the same, still threw evil back on God, as creator of matter from eternity.

Out of that primitive doctrine which connected evil indirectly with God as conscious creator of the will and its results, came the Christian article of original sin and its expiation. The attempt to escape the revolting consequences of this belief, the monstrosity of ascribing sin deserving infinite wrath to the purest as well as to the worst of mankind, led to Origen's kindly semi-Platonic theory of antenatal sin, — a weak shifting back of the tragedy of Adam's fall, without accounting for it. But the old logical necessity of throwing the whole responsi-

[1] Romans, ix. 17.

[2] *Institutiones Divinæ*, ii. 8. Hauteville: *Morale et l'Eglise*, p. 22.

bility for evil on Him who made man free to choose it, was not to be escaped in this way. Equally vain was the theory that Adam and Eve were created pure; for how could that be, if they had received a capacity for sin which made them able to involve all their posterity in total depravity and eternal wrath, and to curse the world with physical death and moral impotence, so that the incarnation of God, the atonement, and redemption through Christ became necessary? How could the very first act of pure beings involve such immeasurable crime and consequence as Augustine saw in that earliest exercise of free will? No such prodigy was wrought out of the first disobedience, in the Bundehesh; none out of the fall of Yima, in the Avesta. This was the terrible triumph of Evil in a more intensely monotheistic faith.

This monstrous deduction was slowly evolved. Neither the Gospels nor Paul reached it.[1] The older Fathers generally admit the counteracting power of free-will to save, as it had wounded, man, — some, like Mani, laying sin at the door of eternal matter as "the flesh." It was in the fifth century that the consequences of the theory burst into full flower in Augustine, whose protest against Pelagius argued logically that the denial of an utter perversion and ruin of the will through Adam's sin struck at the foundations of the Christian system by taking away the necessity for atonement and salvation by Christ. Nothing could serve the purpose but the conjunction of absolute impotence of man for good, and eternal wrath against him for doing evil, as results of the free-will which God himself had given him. What premise of human thought has ever brought such monstrous results from the act of an omnipotent Will, bestowing on its children the power of free choice involved in its own being?

Yet this is the natural result of the theory which traces

[1] Romans, v. 12, is mistranslated. Hauteville, p. 33.

evil to a personal will. Such a theory cannot solve the problem. Epicurus stated the case fairly when he said:

> "Either God wishes to abolish evil and cannot, and then He is not omnipotent;
> Or He cannot and does not wish to, and then He is both imperfect and wicked;
> Or He can and does not wish to, and then He is wicked;
> Or He both wishes to and can, and if so, How comes evil to exist at all?"

That which is worshipped as infinite in its perfection must also be infinite in its perversion; and the tracing of evil to so pervertible a thing as will in God or man must issue in some such exaggerated conclusion as the orthodox dogma above stated. In the same way, man's free-will being made responsible for evil, the issue will be an absolute denial of all human responsibility whatever. And this step is taken in the Augustinian doctrine of divine "Decrees from all Eternity." It comes to this, and this only: at the beginning, as at the end, God alone is responsible for sin. One infinite personal Will in the universe excludes all other responsibility for the results.

It would have been better to remember Bion's saying, "that God's punishing the children for the sin of their fathers is like a physician giving medicine to the son or grandson of his patient."[1] It were wiser, surely, not to exalt a personal Will to the throne of the universe, if the conditions are that it shall behave irrationally in propagating its own freedom.

Men have reached a solution of evil which is not complicated by theological difficulties like these, by confining themselves to the facts of human consciousness; a solution which rests on natural and necessary relations, the only real rest for the spirit of man, — not on the contingencies of will. The Stoic Chrysippus said, that in the nature of

[1] Plutarch: *De Sera Numinis Vindicta*, xix.

things evil is necessary to good; that the knowledge of good involves the knowledge of its opposite; and Euripides has the same idea. That evil is good in the making is the foundation of the great consolations of the ancient teachers, and stands by virtue of that conduct which of itself makes good the law. The thinker sees that evil must exist, if only as imperfection, as the condition of progress, as the correlative of that finiteness which is the ground of all individual being. The war against evil, moral and physical, is the education of all greatness and all goodness; and power is measured by resistance. Evil is the contrast of the actual stage on which we stand, with the ideal; which represents a ceaseless advancing power in man to become at one with the universe and its divine order. Only this abiding hope of the ideal as the goal can make endurance of the steps possible. The dark side of Nature and life cannot be justified as we justify the works or ways of personal will. No conscious moral foresight or choice can be rationally conceived as devising or intending the wrong and suffering which have befallen the innumerable millions of mankind. No anthropomorphic deity can stand under the burden of such responsibility. The Platonic Demiurge, commissioned to organize and shape the necessities of crude substance into a perfect cosmos of souls and bodies, working it all out teleologically, a pure system of final causes, is a confessed failure, and Plato does not allow his responsibility for the evil of the world. The whole theology of a fore-and-after-looking, predetermining God, a time-conditioned demiurgic will, breaks down before the problem of evil which attends every step of human and even cosmic growth. The Life of the Universe, the unity of substance, to which alone belongs the highest Name, is wholly incommensurate with the necessary moulds of finite consciousness, the limited phenomenal relations of time and space. Whatever mythological

forms of speech may be unavoidable in religion, the perplexities which beset this fact of evil, especially in its moral aspect, will only be multiplied with the advance of knowledge, so long as we attempt to explain it by a divine power acting by intention, motive, purpose, after the manner of men. No wiser are we, with all our religious systems, than that oldest of true philosophers, Xenophanes, who taught the Greeks that truth lay beyond their mythic tales of the gods, and sought to hint what none can yet express: "God is not like to mortals, in body or mind, since with the whole of him he sees, with the whole of him he thinks, with the whole of him he hears, forever abiding the same." Till we can comprehend essential Being, eternal Substance, let us not impose upon it the conditions of human will. The highest philosophy is to know the laws of our being in themselves; the highest religion is to trust them as the best, because they are our nature; the highest morality is to work loyally upon the facts of life, transforming them into the liberty and humanity of the ideal; and where we cannot do this, to accept our limits without losing our faith and hope in the best. There is great help towards this achievement in recognizing those limits in ourselves which we refrain from ascribing to God as the substance of the whole. As seeing growth but in fragments; as knowing the world not as it is in itself, but under the conditions of our actual stage of progress; as making the world what it is to us, by ever transforming it anew into the likeness of ourselves, — we may well apply to evil the deeper insight of the optimist, which perceives it to be illusion; not in so far as our duty or our emotions are concerned, but in so far as it seems to contradict the promise of the ideal, by covering past, present, and future alike in unchangeable gloom. We have seen that this was the enduring truth in the old Hindu conception of Mâyâ and in the Buddhist doctrine of life. Some of the Christian Fathers

(even Augustine), in the same spirit, spoke of evil as unreality, as something imagined by man through his ignorance and immaturity, and passing away in proportion as he comes nearer to seeing things as a whole. Combining this, as they did, with a theological anthropomorphism which as Christians they could not escape, they betrayed at least a desire to save the will of God from responsibility for evil; which they could only do by denying its reality.

To believe in the unreality of evil seems to require a certain mystic elevation of faith; but it is not, as we have seen, without foundation in the facts of experience and the laws of growth. This is indubitable. Our conception of evil changes with our changing mood, our growing insight, our mastery of the laws of life. It changes as we look back on the things that looked so rigid in ugliness, and see what it has brought about, what necessitated it, what compensated it. The charitable judgment that grows with our experience is found to be not charity so much as truer justice; the sympathies, taught by science to enter more objectively into the pain of past conditions of the world or the race, learn the law that ills are relative; that, substantially, the strength is according to the day. How the old severities of judgment, the old sense of curse and blight, melt away with the better knowledge, the freer study of the world, into trust

> "that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt and taints of blood;
>
> "That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete."

Science helps to change the old rigid conception of positive evil by proving the law of antagonism to be a necessity of existence and growth. So that evil, seen in its broader relations, becomes a part of that polarity which runs through all life, organic or inorganic, and results in structure, progress, beauty, order, good. Science is unitary; yet here is Dualism as its central law. And while the conception of evil is thus removed from the region of theological intention into that of constructive law, the moral sense is made all the freer to repudiate evil choice by escaping the influence of a creed which gives to moral and physical evil alike the sanction of a deliberate purpose of Divine Will. For the necessity of evil in some form to all progress does not make it attractive, though it may render the moral judgments of good men more charitable to the evil-doer. But the recognition that moral evil in itself is the ever-existing opposite pole to good, and that progress consists in constant strife to overcome it by the force of good, is the very pith of principle, the ground of moral conviction and practical consecration to duty.

It is true that the elements of this polarity, the strife for survival, the struggle for existence, the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty, the impermanence of ties, may be interpreted in the interest of pessimism. And especially does science tend that way when it is concerned only with the understanding of phenomena, and exalts the senses as sole origin of knowledge, under the name of experience, ignoring the ideal and even the personal factor, without which it cannot really take a step in the discovery of universal order. So limited is the understanding, so essential is ideal insight and faith, that science is demoralized by such conditions, and becomes a sterner tyrant than theology has ever been, holding man fast to the lower aspects, the discouraging concrete details, the power of outward circumstances over man's hope and faith. There arises,

even on these new fields of physical science, an inconsistency not unlike that of those early Christian sects, both orthodox and heretical, who declared matter impure and evil, while raising it to a rank in the universe which conditioned and largely determined the activity of God. But the true function of science is altogether different. It substitutes universal law for supernatural interference and caprice. It fearlessly explores the real conditions of life, the facts of human destiny, and reconciles man to his relations in the order of the world; so educating him to accept these inevitable conditions of existence, whether seemingly good or evil, as the best for him, because they lift him into the higher morality of free obedience and the serener life of natural trust.

It has been well said that the old Greek drama aims at depicting the destinies of men, and the modern at evolving their characters: such is the difference in the treatment of ethical and spiritual problems. The only solution of evil must be found in the facts of experience themselves. The inevitable laws of antagonism, of contradiction, of irony, of wrong conditions, and bad uses of pain and loss, must be accepted through an absolute trust in the integrity of the moral universe, and solved by disinterested labor, not for personal happiness, not for utilitarian successes, but to fulfil the inward prompting to serve the ideal, the purest, and the best.

II.

GNOSTICISM.

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GNOSTICISM.

IT was the connection of Manichæism with the great Gnostic schools that rendered it so obnoxious to the Christian Church. It was built on the foundations laid by that line of heretical teachers of the second century, — Carpocrates, Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion, Bardesanes, — who had gathered the spiritual and intellectual idealism of the older religions into rationalistic systems, destructive of implicit faith. The large scope of Gnosticism, in its effort to save the traditions of human reason from being swept away by an exclusive revelation, may be seen in the fact that its elements have been traced in such reactions against the Old Testament law and faith as the Essenic rejection of the Temple service, the Septuagint conversion of Jahveh into a more spiritual God, the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom, and the Logos of Philo; in the Platonic Ideas and Emanations; in the Dualism of Zoroaster and Empedocles; in the Buddhist doctrine of Illusion, of the soul's imprisonment in the senses, and its release therefrom; as well as in its non-Christian conception of a redeeming Christ. It has been supposed that Marcion, one of the more learned Gnostics, synthesized the three great religions in the three principal factors of his system; finding his God in Christianity, his Demiurge in Judaism, his Evil Principle in Heathenism.[1] It is entirely true that Gnosticism was the product of an effort to combine the best elements of all these religious and philosophical beliefs under a single principle, of which the appropriate

[1] Baur: *Gnosis*, p. 277.

name was Gnosis, or *ideal knowledge.* It is not meant by this explanation that there was nothing original in the thought or method of these men who built with the traditions of the world; that their work was a conscious syncretism only. In the mighty ferment of that age the whole past was seething, and its elementary forces, loosed from special combinations, had entered into the unconscious circulations of mind. The new systems that were shaped out of these materials were the natural products of the time, which called forth its own prophets; and they must clothe in these symbols their sense of its demands. These efforts of the speculative intellect to solve the mystery of moral and physical evil, and bridge the passage from the infinite to the finite, from the perfect to the imperfect, from the highest to the lowest, without detriment to the truth of either term, were therefore not mere scholastic pedantry. The reproductions of the old conceptions and methods, which we can now trace in so many systems that preceded them, were fresh obedience to the eternal laws of thought. They serve to show the sincerity and depth of those earlier endeavors, and point us to those elements in them which could not die with their makers. The very name by which they designated their common aspiration for the deeper meaning, the ideal solution of life, — *gnosis*, — was anticipated ages before, in the *jñâna* of the Hindu philosophers, chosen for a precisely similar purpose; and it still stands in our word *agnosticism*, to prove by implication at least, even now at the end of the Christian centuries, the immortality of that very aspiration which is thus declared to be a fruitless dream. So far was Gnosticism from being a servile adherence to ancient names and dogmas, a mere eclectic farrago of accepted traditions, that by its very nature, as well as by the variety and freedom of its forms, it was an organic protest against implicit faith, — a recurrence to the rights of reason, when they were threatened,

as never before or since in history, with entire suppression, by the claims of a special revelation. Itself not free from supernaturalistic elements, it resisted that passive reception of dogmatic and personal absolutism which is the essence of supernaturalistic faith. It refused to drop the constructive powers of the intellect, which twenty centuries had slowly evolved, before a creed which pronounced the intellect sinful and vain; to surrender its rights of criticism before old and new scriptures which bore on their face corruption and delusion amidst all the better features which these had obscured. If the Christian Church could maintain that the masses of mankind required an incarnate God, Gnosticism also could insist that the present and future alike demanded that reason should not be dethroned by putting a historic personage, a man of flesh and blood, on the throne of the universe. No exclusive religion should reign by the denial of all that other religions had contributed to human thought. Especially a Hebrew deity, fettered in mind, ignoble in spirit, supplanted by the progress of man, could be only a Demiurge, a blind instrument of the God who is all in all. Egypt, Syria, Persia, India, Greece, had not toiled merely to prepare the way for a word of God that should come down all new from heaven to silence them forever, and begin man's life and hope afresh as if they had never been. And the progress of humanity, which drops no thread in the web of history, and perpetuates all forces through all changes of name, to live in the great currents of social evolution, whose marvellous analysis reveals that no past service of thought or good has ever died, pronounces the Gnostic right, — in that claim for universal history at least.

Gnosticism accepted the name of Christian, and many of the terms by which Christians expressed their faith; but the distinctive substance of that faith it rejected, as

these pages have already shown. The Elkesaites[1] regarded the New Testament Christ as but one of many forms of the Christ who had appeared again and again in human history, transformed from body to body, after the manner of the Hindu incarnations of Vishnu the Preserver. The Carpocratians believed that the soul of Jesus was like all other souls, reaching its power over the world by overcoming the "world-archons," and that all who were similarly victorious over evil would have similar gifts; and so they put him among the great men of history, and honored all alike.[2] "Valentinus," says Clement of Alexandria, "makes the truth common, whether it be the Jewish writings or those of the philosophers."[3] Clement, by whose writings mainly it is that we discover the nobler side of the Gnostics,[4] quotes Valentinus as saying that it is only by the presence of God that the heart becomes pure from evil, and that he who possesses a pure heart shall see God.[5] Marcion affirmed that the New Testament Christ was not the Christ predicted in the Old Testament, who was yet to come and restore the Jewish State.[6] It was clearly recognized by the Church that revelation could not endure the rivalry of reason; the question was no incidental and temporary one, but rooted in the elements of progress; and this war, waged by typical positive religion, has no cessation, scarcely a truce. As it began in the struggle with Gnosticism, so it has lasted to the present day, and is now a struggle with science. But was the Gnostic altogether in the right? By no means.

What the Christians could not understand, so exacting was their own worship of Christ as a revealer of positive

[1] Hippolytus: *Philosophy*, x. xx.

[2] Irenæus, vii. 20.

[3] Clement of Alexandria: *Stromata*, vi. 6.

[4] Baur (*Gnosis*, 520) allows this, though admitting that Clement believed that the Gnostics thought all heathen truth stolen from Christianity, which was not true of the Gnostics, only of Clement himself.

[5] Clement of Alexandria: *Stromata*, ii. 20.

[6] Tertullian: *Against Marcion*, iv. vi.

divine commands, was this, — that the Gnostic was constructing a mythology around the idea of God, just as they were themselves constructing a mythology around the name of Christ; that he was seeking to explain the fact of evil by a crude philosophy of matter, just as they were by a crude theory of Satanic will; and just as they were searching for allegories and types of Christ in the Biblical records, and to a certain extent in the testimonies of heathen blindness, so the Gnostic was searching out fanciful allegories and types of a divine personal process in the whole material of human experience, past and present. The one structure was a work of the imagination as well as the other. That of the Christians possessed the advantage of a simplicity, concentration, and exclusiveness which made its appeal effective with the multitudes who were seeking rest from the confusion of systems and the pressing sense of ignorance and isolation. None the less real, however, was that want of the age, and of all ages, which was to be met only by students of the intellectual bearings of spiritual truths, — by those who could not silence the deep problems of experience by the magic of a miracle, or the rebuke of a revelation, or by anything short of the witness of the laws of thought. In the great cosmic drama, or epos, of Gnosticism, spiritual principles, psychological qualities, ethical forces, figured as persons, in true Iranian fashion. The processes of emanation became successive *Æons*, — genealogical periods, or stages of spiritual descent, — further conceived as male and female, combined in syzygies, in whose opposition lay a real conjunction and completeness. By this emanative series, this descent of principles, not in time, but in the order of psychological function, the *Pleroma*, or fulness of Being, was supposed to become the basis of changes and descending degrees, by which the existence and experience of man were intellectually explicable without separating

him from the life of God. All this mediation was of course an elaborate symbol, which could only stand for reality to the eyes of anthropomorphism. In the same way Evil, conceived as a principle as far as possible removed from God, uncreated and unchangeable, could only become the ground of the soul's imprisonment and release by the interaction of ethical forces in dramatic personal action. On the other hand, how far this was believed with mythological faith, how far recognized by the reason as poetic symbol of rational truth, it is not easy to say. But it is certain that the whole process rested on philosophical foundations; that the Æons and the powers, however personified, meant *principles*, and followed the logic of principles. Æon was *ἀεὶ-ὄν*, everlasting reality, like the Platonic Idea, lifted above all personal conditions and limitations; as in the Persian *Amesha-çpentas*, the personal garb, with which language was obliged to clothe them, was transparent to the abstract quality they represented, and served but to make this quality more real. The Church, which had carried anthropomorphism to the extent of regarding Jesus of Nazareth as the flesh and blood of God, and personified evil in an everlasting kingdom of Satan and his hosts, held this Gnostic epos to be blasphemy. It was perfectly true to its claim of an exclusive revelation, in calling this product of human reason "vain babblings and antitheses of a spurious gnosis;"[1] "rudiments of the cosmos, not after Christ;"[2] "fables and genealogies ministering questions, rather than building up in faith;"[3] "antichrist, denying Christ come in the flesh;"[4] "commandments and doctrines of men;"[5] "opinions read from what is not written;" "adaptations of the oracles of God to baseless fictions."[6]

Apart from all these matters in dispute, in which both parties seem far enough from the religious science of our

[1] 1 Timothy, vi. 20.
[2] Colossians, ii. 8.
[3] 1 Timothy, i. 4.
[4] 1 John, iv. 3.
[5] Colossians, ii. 22.
[6] Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, i. viii. 1.

time, the main question, on which really hinged all others, was whether reason goes behind revelation and tests it. For the Christian, revelation had settled all questions, and reason must begin and end with implicit faith in Christ as centre and sum of all. It was the heresy of the Gnostic that he put Christ among the Æons, in a chain of Being, so that it was only in a secondary sense that he was the fulness (*Pleroma*) of God. To attempt philosophizing on his relations with the Father beyond his own positive teaching, to make the Only Begotten (*Monogenes*) a separate Æon from the Christ, and the Wisdom (*Nous*) of God yet another Æon, and to deny that the man Jesus was either of the three, was to Christian simplicity to put vain babbling for an all-sufficient and authoritative faith. It was not the use of these and other terms familiar to Gnostic reasoning that the Church found so mischievous, — they all belonged to the familiar intellectual phraseology of the age, — but simply the use of them for other purposes than to celebrate the incarnation of God in the man Jesus. Paul and John had already appropriated them, and the early Fathers are greatly concerned to show that they have found their only meaning in Jesus. They shall no longer retain their free relation to philosophical thought. Pleroma, Logos, Grace (*Charis*), Truth (*Aletheia*), Life (*Zoe*), Only Begotten (*Monogenes*), — these Gnostic powers are all in the proem of John's Gospel confidently appropriated to Jesus.[1] Paul had taught the Wisdom (*Sophia*) of God "*in a mystery*," "before all Æons," that centred in the humanity of Jesus; [2] yet he would not allow the Gnostics also to humanize Wisdom, by making their own *Sophia* learn by experience the lesson of trust in limit (*Horos*), and in the fulness of God, which was her home. Clement of Alexandria says the true Gnostic condemns lust, and is patient

[1] See also Ephesians, iii. 14. 1 Timothy, i. 17. 1 John, ii. 1; iii. 16.
[2] 1 Corinthians, ii. 7.

under trial.[1] Inconsistencies like these are part of the traditional method of Christian apologists in dealing with heresy down to the present moment, even among the most enlightened of the class. They belong to the necessities of the revelation doctrine.

Irenæus, who abhors the dramatic personifications and genealogical fictions of the Gnostics, can indulge in Old Testament types and prefigurations of Christ, of the most fanciful description.[2] Hippolytus, who charges these heretics with gross superstition, has a hell prepared for them worthy of Dante, with fiery lake and eyes of demons, and worms that prey on the corruption that breeds them.[3] The power of working miracles, raising the dead, and casting out demons, which the orthodox called blasphemous and lying magic in Simon Magus and his successors, they did not hesitate to adduce as conclusive evidence, in the case of their Master and his apostles, that their religion was true and their commission divine.[4] The charge that the Gnostics despised the multitude as incapable of hearing and receiving the higher *gnosis*, came with ill grace from the followers of Paul teaching the wisdom of God "in a mystery,"[5] addressing his own converts "not as spiritual but as carnal, and to be fed with milk and not with meat;"[6] and describing the gospel as a *gnosis*, whose possession raised one above the weaker minds around him.[7] It would be difficult to find a more self-exalting contempt for the spiritual capacities of all who were outside of the pale of a special faith than is found in the writings of the Fathers of the early Christian centuries; the broadest and freest of whom, Clement of Alexandria, pronounces the multitude "swinish," so that after the example of his Master he fears to cast his pearls before them, and like Paul

[1] *Stromata*, ii. 20.
[2] Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, bk. iii. chap. xi.
[3] Hippolytus: *Refutation of all Heresies*, x. 30.
[4] Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, ii. xxxi. 2.
[5] 1 Corinthians, ii. 7.
[6] 1 Corinthians, iii. 1, 2.
[7] Ibid., viii. 10.

holds it "requisite to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken by the Son of God," because "to the *natural* man the things of God are foolishness."[1] "The wise do not utter with the mouth what they reason in council." It cannot be said that this esotericism was incidental in these teachers of the Christian gospel. It belonged to the spirit of their Master to speak in parables, as to those who "having ears, could not hear," and to confine the naked truth to the chosen few. That this distinction was to a certain extent indispensable, is not to be doubted; but the Gnostic had certainly an equal right with the orthodox to recognize the necessity. The implicit faith (*pistis*) of the latter was at least as marked by spiritual pride as the *gnosis* of the other by intellectual. It demanded of the convert a most difficult renunciation of religious traditions and worldly interests and cares, and fostered, for this reason alone, an intense feeling of self-complacency and exaltation above the carnal world. Think for a moment with what spiritual conceit, far more absolute than is now possible for the most confident orthodox church-member, the baptized and elected member of Christ's body must have regarded the outside millions, in view of the speedy approach of the end of the world and the coming of Christ in judgment, to separate the sheep from the goats. If the Gnostic had his elect, separated by initiations and harder vows from the class of hearers, like the antique mysteries of Mithra and of Zeus, the Christian erected the same method into an institution which has survived to the present day, and resisted every assault but that of scientific law. There was certainly no more contempt of human capacity involved in the Gnostic saying that "not one in a thousand persons could understand the mysteries of divine knowledge"[2] (which saying Irenæus totally misrepresented),[3] than in

[1] Clement: *Stromata*, i. xii.
[2] Clement: *Stromata*.
[3] Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, i. xxiv. See Renan: *l'Église Chrétienne*, 165.

the orthodox Christians saying that the truths of their revelation were beyond the unaided reason of mankind itself, and appropriable only through the supernatural mission of their Scriptures and their Christ.

In the harsh sketches of the opinions and life of the Gnostics, drawn by their enemies, who signalized their victory by destroying the writings in which we might have read what the accused had to say in their own defence, we find not a few things laid to their charge which seem to us highly creditable to their freedom and sense. Their belief that the resurrection day was of the past, not in the future, which struck the orthodox with horror, was evidently a spiritualized definition of resurrection as a new birth of the soul out of the old body of darkness and evil, rather than a common mechanical rising of all *bodies* at once on a judgment day, to receive Divine sentence upon their mere flesh and blood, — all which could not but seem to the anti-materialism of the Gnostic a pure absurdity. He could, indeed, point to a doctrine substantially similar to his own in the noblest production of the Christian Church, — the Gospel of John. Clement quotes Basilides as saying, "I will affirm anything rather than call Providence evil;"[1] in which his meaning (confusedly interpreted, and as confusedly refuted by the critic) seems to have been, that even in the sufferings of good men there must be some ground of compensation, or justice, that makes the ways of Providence less dark. After wading through the tangled logic of the refutation, one can nowise help siding, so far as the controversy is concerned, with the spirit, at least, of the Gnostic's sentence.

Irenæus declares it to be malignant in the Gnostics to argue from the orthodox premise, that heaven is God's throne and the earth His footstool, that, if this be so, then

[1] Clement: *Stromata*, iv. 12.

God will pass away when these pass away, and that this God cannot therefore be the highest, but only an inferior or world-building one.[1] He thinks it proof of their immorality that they visit theatres and shows, and eat meats offered to idols;[2] of their impiety, that they put up images of Christ by the side of images of Plato, Pythagoras, and Aristotle,[3] and that they declared themselves to have abandoned Judaism, yet without becoming Christians.[4] These data would rather indicate that their tendencies were to a more natural and rational philosophy than that of their opponents. So strongly were they persuaded that the Mosaic religion, by reason of its anthropomorphism, was the product of blindness or perverseness, or of imperfection of some kind, that some of them interpreted it by contradiction, and defended the personages represented in it as evil, — such as Cain, Esau, Korah, the Sodomites, whom they declared to have been misrepresented, and stretched the same canon so far as to cover the Judas of the New Testament writers. How they interpreted the Fall of Adam and Eve has already been noticed. Marcion called the Old Testament ideal, justice without goodness; wherein there was a degree of truth, at least as he understood the words. Other Gnostics repudiated it as evil in a more positive sense, and all regarded it as inferior, and its God as unintentionally subserving a higher will. On the other hand, the earliest Christian Gnosticism (to which also Mahometanism is believed by Sprenger to go back) seems to have been a Judaistic rejection of that growing tendency to deify the man Jesus, which was contrary to the whole genius of traditional Judaism; and out of this gradually grew a complete Docetic theory, explaining the New Testament life of Jesus, so far as the incarnation of the Spirit of God was

[1] Irenæus: *Against Heresies*, iv. 3.
[2] Ibid., i. vi. 3.
[3] Ibid., i. xxv. 6.
[4] Ibid., i. xxiv.

concerned, as an illusion.[1] Docetism is not an easy thing for us to comprehend. Probably, as has been already said, it was not a very clear matter to the Gnostics themselves, but hovered in a mystic dream, as illusory in its way as that flesh-and-blood Christ which it denied. The Gnostics differed widely among themselves as to the person of Jesus, — from Carpocrates, who regarded him as simply human, and Basilides, who regarded him as a man on whom the true Christ alighted, but without really becoming one with him, to the pure Docetism of Valentinus and Marcion, who held that his whole external appearance was dramatic and illusory, because the spirit could have no conjunction whatever with flesh and blood.[2] But all refused to deify the person of Jesus, as they refused to accept the Mosaic God. This they did in order to exalt their "Christ of the Spirit," in whom they found the deliverer of the fallen Wisdom of God imprisoned in the outside darkness of matter, and so the redeemer of man and of the world. So far as this had they accepted Christianity in an ideal and mystical form. But, then, this ideal Christ was simply an Æon, though representing the Pleroma; and the vast chain of cosmical causes and effects of which his person and function proved but a step was welded by the rationalistic logic of necessary law.

We have here the essence of the claim of reason, on the part of the Gnostics, to determine religious conviction. They pursued therein an aspiration to maintain the perfect purity of the idea of God as an offset to their profound sense of evil in the world of matter and man. This consciousness of evil as positive and overwhelming was the great burden of the age, analogous to the transmigration dogma whose reaction was Nirvâna in the remoter East.

[1] See Basilides in Beausobre, ii. 25. Marcion in Hippolytus, vii. 19. Tertullian: *Against Marcion*, iii. viii. Bardesanes in Beausobre, ii. 157. Saturninus in Irenæus, i. xxiv.

[2] See Baur: *Gnosis*.

The dualistic religions of Gnosticism and Christianity were indeed varied expressions of this; and with all their differences, it was this that determined them to a common purpose, — that of emancipating humanity from its apparent doom. While Christianity concentrated its hope on an incarnation of God as the only sufficient refuge for man, Gnosticism, anticipating the final decision of the ages on the question, clung to the pure idea of perfection in God; and by jealously guarding this at every point, found in it the all-sufficient guarantee for a divine process of restoration, whose steps, following the law of the ideal, should in nowise invalidate that rest for the soul. The Gnostic mind was bent on maintaining the absolute separation of the ideal Supreme from all implication in moral and physical evil, as a fixed inviolable centre through which all spiritual problems could find solution. Its philosophy of Dualism was a mystical flight out of evil to the bosom of God, as orthodoxy was an equally mystical descent of God into the limitations and imperfections which were the conditions of evil. But Gnosticism further affirmed that neither the ascent nor the descent was conceivable as an instant fiat; that man could not enter the Highest, nor the Highest be transformed into humanity, without intermediate gradations of being, and the sacred transitions of psychical law. To express these, it aimed to bring the free play of the religious imagination, which had filled these spaces of the ideal with innumerable mythic beings and the boundless license of poetic legend, representing every phase of human feeling in the earlier religions of Greece, Egypt, and Persia, under strict conditions of rationality. Thus to their religious reason the principle of emanation had a very similar necessity to the principle of evolution in modern science. They refused to sacrifice this law of continuity to the catastrophe of miracle. The super-sensual was not super-rational. The goodness of God

must be justified, not by sacrificing reason, but by making it divine. So early, in muffled tones, pealed the death-knell of supernaturalism, at the very outset of the controversy of the Christian Church.

But this jealousy for the purity of the Ideal intensifies the opposite pole, and Evil is all the more concentrated in the Gnostic conception of "matter," — as by Plato in an analogous force of "necessity," a principle of disorder, — in which the divine element of the soul finds itself imprisoned, not indeed in essential union with it, which is impossible, but by a kind of external contact or immersion. For the finite soul, escape from these bonds alone is its real nature and life; and the assumption of them by the Infinite (or Pleroma) is and must be unreal, and all appearance of it an illusion. At the very moment, then, when Jesus was coming to be regarded as God in the flesh, arose the Gnostic affirmation that the thing was impossible; a human personal body of God was a fiction. If the delivering Christ seemed to walk and work in living shape in Judea and Galilee, it was a phantasm; the reality was no visible life, suffering, and death, but invisible, in the soul of the believer, who received the saving *gnosis*, which did not come by observation.

Thus the Docetic Christ of the Gnostic and the supernatural Christ of the Church are alike impossible schemes for bringing God in the form of a personal saviour into relation with man as fallen and alienated from good, — the one by illusion, the other by miracle; and both are signs of the entire absence of a genuine historical sense in that period, the rapid evaporation of positive fact into nebulous mists, which took such shape as best suited the cravings of reason or faith. It is curious to observe that the difficulty of reconciling the records of Jesus' life and death with the rights of rational science in modern times has given rise to an obscuration of historical facts and laws

very similar to ancient Docetism. There is a semi-mystical school of "Christian rationalists" who speak of the recorded life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as if they were to be considered merely as facts of the spiritual experience, treating the question of their historical validity as of no importance; in other words, as if they were phantasmal, while at the same time claiming the Christian name and dogma, which rests upon their historical reality alone.

Nor did either the Gnostic or Christian form of Dualism suffice to bring under one solution the opposing principles of moral and physical good and evil. According to the Christian, evil was the work of Satan, possessing and perverting the will of man, and Nature through the fall of man. According to the Gnostic, it was the cosmic preter-human energy of the principle of darkness aroused to creative work by the fall of the youngest of the Æons from the pure Pleroma, through ambition to expand from her proper sphere. In both alike the principle of evil remains at last as it was in the beginning, — unchanged, and fast in its inherent antagonism to good.[1] But there still remains a hint of instinctive psychological science in this myth of the wandering Æon, whose blind ambition to drop her true functions for a vaster sovereignty led to the sorrows and sins of the world. She is that inferior Wisdom (*Sophia*), who signifies, after all, that the vice in human faculties is not in essence, but in excess. Thus the worship of Reason proved itself able to combine with a jealous care for the exaltation of the ideal an equal recognition of human

[1] Plato's conception of evil in *Timæus* is not unlike the Gnostic idea of the roots of that scheme of things, — an antagonism of order and disorder, creation and necessity, the unorganizable or lawless element in substance, — which the good Demiurge can only partially work up, and which mixes with the souls he makes, each out of an immortal with two mortal ones and a body, thus foredooming it to corruption and stupidity so far. (See Grote's *Plato*, chap. xxxvi.) Positive evil is also for Plato in sexual love; since he allows none of it in his guardians (*Republic*), who must be coupled, for generative purposes, according to prescribed rules, by officials of the State, of course without mutual affection. Thus the whole scheme of creation fails, though the cosmos is all beauty. Women and animals are the result of degenerate men.

limitations. While worshippers of Reason, the Gnostics believed that Reason was separated from her native light so long as she failed to accept the guidance of Horos, — personification of limit. In other words, it is the sense of her ignorance (*agnoia*) that brings her (even the intellect, not the passions and pride of man alone) back to the bosom of the Pleroma, — that sense of ignorance which is the beginning of real knowledge and salvation for the highest philosophy and sainthood of every age and faith. The new-coined modern word, "Agnosticism," already referred to, conveys a similar charge of pride and self-sufficiency against the ancient Gnostics with that brought by the early orthodox Christians; but the myth of the wandering Æon, on which Gnostic philosophy turns,[1] points to the postulate of scientific inquiry, — that grand secret of wisdom through humility, which belongs alike to the ancient Socratic confession and to every honest and thoughtful modern admission of doubts insoluble on long-recognized foundations of religious belief. The spirit of this myth pervades all the Gnostic writings. The evil in the world is due to blindness. The Demiurge is blind; the Old Testament is delusive. Error troubles even the superhuman Æon world. The mighty drama of the wandering and passion of Wisdom is solved in the restoration of a knowledge of the Father, that brings joy to every Æon in its place and work. The very symbol of Evil is the darkness in which the soul cannot see; that of Good is the light which scatters every shadow of sin. In Christian eyes it was the crime of these New Testament Magi that they did not bring the pride of reason to the feet of the child Jesus. They adored instead the Christ-star in the heaven of thought. Their Christ was a divine ideal hovering over

[1] See especially the system of Valentinus in Hippolytus, *Philosophy*, vi. ii. 31. Renan: *L'Église Chrétienne*, chap. ix. Irenæus, bk. iii. Matter: *Histoire du Gnosticisme*, bk. ii. chap. iii. — "Simonianism."

Jesus indeed, as over the world, but not identical with him, and of course only temporarily called by the name of Christ, — the star of their active reason, not of a blind, implicit faith. They refused to impoverish the intelligible world by leaving but a single intermediate being between the Highest and the spheres of recognized bondage and limitation. Protesting against the Jewish and Christian systems for ascribing human and physical attributes to the highest God, they assigned all lower grades of emanation to anthropomorphic personages, and imported into the Pleroma the human elements of generation and sex; not, however, as the Christian writers understood them, in any literal sense, but as the only types imaginable for that continuity of being by which they sought to bridge the spiritual immensities between God and man. In the most developed systems every grade of the descent was a union (*syzygia*) of male and female Æons; in the less elaborated ones, and in some form in all, a primal representative of the Holy Spirit, or a central figure in the mighty drama of fall and renovation, was of the female sex.[1] But this was scarcely less characteristic of heathen, and of orthodox Christian, mythology than of the Gnostic; and in all alike the highest functions, the creative and redeeming, belonged to the male, — all of which shows how entirely ancient mythology and theology were a reflection of actual human institutions and relations.

Of Gnostic Dualism, and its analogy both with the Dualism of early and mediæval Christianity, and with the Dualism of modern science, we have already spoken in the exposition of Manichæism, as well as in the present chapter. Of what may be regarded as the characteristic feature of Gnosticism, — the endeavor to express the

[1] The Gnostic hymns of Bardesanes, celebrating the mythic marriage of the restored Sophia with Christos, were analogous to those of the Christian fathers in honor of the union of Christ with the Church, also symbolized as a female. See account of Manichæan system.

idea of God as an active process, a series of processes, in terms of the intellect, — we need only say, that it was a development of the manifold intellectual traditions of the age. Such an age could not but combine with its profound aspirations towards unity and fulness in Deity the need of gathering into the life of this divine Pleroma the ideal meaning of all those spiritual relations which polytheism had put into mythological forms. The conversation on divine and human things which had been scattered through the mouths of the unnumbered gods of old was refined and concentred within the living fulness of one all-embracing Reason, communing with itself of eternal truths and laws.[1] What the Amesha-çpentas and the Ferouers were to Ormuzd, what the Olympians were to Zeus, — the Platonic ideas, the Alexandrian emanations, and the Gnostic Æons were to these pantheistic forms of deity from which they certainly and naturally flowed; with this difference, that they did not stand outside of the all-containing Deity. They were the intelligible forms and relations of his interior life, ideal types of those processes which seemed essential to the rational conception of God. This concentration was itself one step of intellectual abstraction; and the power which swept the gods of antiquity into a higher and purer unity in the religious consciousness was akin to the processes of modern science; that is, it was essentially intellectual. For in Platonism, still more in Neoplatonism, this abstraction went so far as substantially to substitute ideas for persons. With the Gnostics, it

[1] "The Gnostic schools of Egypt found in the old doctrines of that country all the fundamental ideas of their system, — supreme unknown Being, hidden in mystery at the beginning, successively revealing himself by a series of spirits emanating in *syzygies*, from his bosom or from one another, and who govern in his name the visible world; spirits one of whom, his particular agent, is the creator, and the others share with him the government of the world, while others still conduct mortals to whom they have imparted, in creating their souls, some rays of the divine life. Next, they found a mass of secondary theories, myths, traditions, and symbols, which they worked up as their own." — Matter: *Histoire critique du Gnosticisme*, i. chap. v.

allowed the qualities and relations that were idealized to reclothe themselves in an imaginative dramatic form, and the life of God glowed with the tragedy of human experience. Plato, too, adds to his Ideas a quasi existence of all the Greek gods, in his demiurgic cosmos.[1] Analogous to this was the Christian trinity, itself a dramatic gnosis, in which three persons in one God, — Father, Son, and Spirit, — conceived under the old figure of generation, though every member is male, consult, create, decree, divide their functions into infinite and finite, and the relations between them, and enact the great tragedy of human condemnation and redemption in as completely anthropomorphic a manner as the Gnostic Æons themselves. And around this vast personal drama — into which, as in the Gnostic Mother of Life, or Sophia, a female element, a "Mother of God" or of Christ, enters as an essential figure — have revolved the hopes and fears of sixteen centuries of believing Christendom. This Christian *gnosis* has retained its dependence on the play of personal figures to the very last. It ultimates in the religio-philosophical formulas of modern Hegelianism (a mechanical synthesis of Gnostic and Christian analogies), in which the supposed laws of absolute thought are presented in their fullest abstraction, and then identified with the distinctly personal and ecclesiastical traditions of Christianity. Instead of preserving their validity as intellectual abstractions, they are deliberately swamped in the utterly imperfect personalities of a special religion, which was formed at a period previous to the most important steps in the development of individual and social humanity, and is incapable of representing its ultimate collective powers.

If the Alexandrian philosophy, — that of Plotinus, for example, — after pursuing the track of speculative intellect to the sublimest abstractions of pure Being possible to man,

[1] *Timæus.* Grote: *History of Greece*, i. chap. xvi. p. 410, n.

and approached only by those of the highest thinkers of India, had not only retained pure and perfect faith in these results as intellectual verities in proportion to their all-embracing pantheism, their exaltation above human limitation, but had furthermore pursued with equal earnestness the ethical and practical side of the logical polarity, the *human as human*, the two worlds would have flowed together, as they do in Nature, and a thoroughly free religion, at once scientific and intuitive, would have been the necessary result of these free conditions. Principles only being recognized as the substance of the universe, the ethical requirements and affectional demands of human nature and all its practical interests would have found their noblest basis in the laws of essential being, not only above all caprices of will, but valid alike at every height of intellectual abstraction and in every detail of individual life. Such unity of God and man was impossible in ages when the rights of the intellect could find freedom only in the superhuman sphere, and in that but rarely; while the ethical and religious nature, on the other hand, could find no culture in the study of man and the world. But this divine synthesis, before which all past religions and philosophies pale, because there is even now a vision of that complete whole of which these are fragments, may well be the outcome of the tendencies we are privileged to behold. The distinctive postulate of Gnostic, and we may say of all ancient thought, in all religions, down to scientific times, — of a creative Spirit, unfolding itself in degrees of descent; of a series, greater or less in number, of personal emanations connecting them with the human soul; and of a fall of the lowest member of the series, as of a multitude of souls through sin, into imprisonment within a hostile substance or principle, which could not be excluded from existence and hostility, and the deliverance of the same through the descent of a supernatural Power, — is opposed

to the present conception of the world of mind and matter. No such positive antagonisms and absolutely dissevered elements as those of good and evil, of spirit and matter, of supernatural and natural, of God and man, are now assumed as real at opposite poles of the universe. There is no necessity for bridging an essential chasm between Perfect Light and Utter Darkness. Absolute Negation is a monster, and no reality in man or Nature. The Infinite and the Finite are one whole, inseparable, a divine evolution of perfect law. For that transcendental energy by which man passes beyond the finite phenomena of his experience to the unconditional universalities of law, and perceives the identity of mind with whatsoever it can see or know, has reached a free self-consciousness never possible before. It commands the cosmic realm of science and the common aspirations of mind and soul, never more to be foreclosed.

ISLAM.

I.

MAHOMET.

MAHOMET.

THE scientific study of religious development reveals a continuous progress towards the recognition of Being in its wholeness; in other words, of the universe as Infinite and as One. In conformity with this natural process of growth, the movement of every race is from polytheistic to monotheistic belief, — never in the reverse direction. Whenever man has become capable of a self-conscious study of his relations to life and the world, he has inevitably arrived at a monarchical form of worship. If we look closely at this stage in the evolution of ideal conceptions, we shall find that it consists in the integration of Personality. Its representative has always been an omnipotent conscious Self, an exclusive Sovereign, endowed with all the ideal qualities of Will. This conception, of which the Semitic race has afforded the most exalted types, — in Jahveh, Allah, and the more spiritual and interior humanity of the Christian God, — has hitherto guaranteed to that intensely self-conscious race an undisputed leadership of civilization in matters of religion. This is the secret of its threefold sovereignty in the West.

But the monarchical idea is, after all, but a transient stage in that great historic process by which man is seeking the significance of his demand for unity. Both intellectually and morally it has proved unsatisfying. Its phases have been persistently interrupted, and invariably succeeded by powerful impulses of a mystical and pantheistic, or of a secular and scientific, nature towards a more

or less impersonal worship of ideas, principles, laws, — hints of the monistic or cosmic religion yet to come. They are to be justified, not as finalities, but as the ideal expression of man's progress in the knowledge of his own personality.

Thus Polytheism embodied the spontaneous life of man's instincts, unconscious and unstudied. Dualism reflected the advent of his moral self-consciousness, — the sense of a divided will. Monotheism came in with the more philosophical, or at least more distinct, comprehension of individuality, — of the will as central, supreme source of thought and conduct. The demand for an external and universal form of this sovereignty, corresponding to the inward and private, is the necessary parent of all religious revelations through chosen messengers or organs.

The strongest mark of anthropomorphic limitation in all forms of personal worship is the identification of the Divine perfection with some human representative. The old Babylonian and Assyrian kings not only visibly represented a host of deities, but absorbed every god into their own colossal divinity. In the same way even those religions which claimed to be revelations from an invisible and inscrutable God, — whether the Persian, the Hebrew, the Christian, or the Mahometan, — simply substituted the Prophet, Messiah, or God-man for the older god-absorbing kings. Whatever the moral and spiritual difference, the form of the religious process was the same: it was identification of an individual Master with the absolute Will. Private inspirations were accepted as the omnipotent Word.

If monarchical religion has proved unable to distinguish the infinite from the finite, it has equally failed of separating the temporal from the spiritual sphere of authority. Its ideal, based on personal self-consciousness, can become thoroughly consistent with its own premises only by according to the one absolute Will, as revealed by its Prophet

or Messiah, an undivided sway over every human relation. His warrant from a Supreme Purpose involves the right to legislate at once for the inward and the outward life of man; to be master alike of reason and law; to enforce obedience, as well as to persuade and inspire. His positive commandments can tolerate no rival authority. There is no more question of limit in the claims of a man who reveals God's will to the nations, than in those of a man whose own will rules the nations as their God. Every monarchical religion has logically and devoutly resorted to the sword of the flesh, and by that means established itself in the world. In no other way could it fulfil its conscious function of executing the commands of a supreme personal Will.

The real justification before the bar of history for this personal integration of the religious ideal is its necessity as a step towards the integration of Being itself, as universal Substance and immanent Force. Hitherto it has been the highest aspiration of the great historic religions to purify and elevate this basis on which they stand, so that it tends at the present day to become absorbed in those larger conceptions of which it is but the forerunner. On the other hand, in so far as such positive faiths have succeeded in persistently following their principles to their logical result, their inadequacy to meet man's growing knowledge of his relations has become the more palpable. Of this truth our studies in the genesis of religions and their later fruits have afforded abundant proofs.

But not the less do we recognize the immense service to humanity, whenever the natural movement of past ages towards a moral and spiritual centre of worship has been lifted out of apparent disaster and even failure by some fresh announcement of positive commands from a supreme personal Will. In such emergencies, no other evidence has been possible of the unfailing power of human nature to

hold its upward track. In the chaos of warring nations and contending creeds, of spiritual distraction and moral enervation, the all-directing message has been surely preparing its way.

Thrice has the Semite performed this commanding function of personating a revelation by virtue of the intensity of his own self-conscious will, — in Judaism, in Christianity, in Islam. In all these the monarchical ideal demanded universal sway, — social, political, religious. In all it was successful in pressing personal worship to the farthest logical limits, and preparing the race to demand a larger liberty than itself could bestow. In Christianity and Islam its application of force to every sphere of human experience was as direct as supernatural authority, armed with corresponding social and political resources, could secure. In Judaism it was more indirect, yet able to wield in history a moral absolutism which even these more powerful successors could not equal. All the three were great historical necessities; greatest in this, — that their virtues and their faults alike pointed beyond themselves, to relations with truth and duty more natural, immediate, and free.

We have now reached the critical moment in the history of Iran when one of these colossal waves of concentrated Will was gathered up to engulf the religious and political life of the Eastern world.

The opening of the seventh century was an epoch of disintegration, — national, social, and religious. Its phenomena were such as have always involved a fresh form of positive faith, to recall all wandering forces into the inevitable track of spiritual evolution, towards the integration of personal worship. Their whole significance centred in the demand for a more positive revelation than that attained by Christianity itself, in the name of the Unity of God. The exhausting wars of Rome and Persia hopelessly

divided the civilized world. Every effort of an autocratic Justinian to unite his Roman empire under the Christian faith and law had gone down in the sack of cities and the ashes of a thousand altar-fires. The utter failure of Zoroastrian Dualism and Christian Trinitarianism to coalesce, in an age confusedly stirred by the experience of universal interests and relations, showed that a deeper current than either of these beliefs was setting towards a more perfect concentration of the religious ideal. Never since the first days of Christianity had the demand for assured trust in one Supreme Will been so sharply goaded by irreconcilable strifes and pretensions. The endless battle of sects about the twofold nature of Christ and the inner logic of tripersonality, which no decree of Cæsar or formula of bishops could abate; the world-wide crusade against the irrepressible Manichee, by both his natural parents, the Church of Zoroaster and the Church of Christ; the prodigious fertility of Sassanian Persia in sects, orthodox and rationalistic, of every shade, and alive with every seed of that mighty intellectual ferment of the next four centuries, which Iran was destined to bequeath to Islam in the splendid days of the Caliphate; the special strife of west-Iranian Magism, fast anchored in its dualistic traditions, with heretical Zendiks working out their higher synthesis of Zrvan in the more spiritual Iran of the East; above all, that free opening of all intellectual paths by the great Nûshirvân, whose hospitality, while Mahomet was yet in his infancy, had flooded Persia with Greek and Christian philosophies and Buddhist asceticism and the oldest wisdom of the far East, and spread on all the winds the subtle disputes of her famous schools of Balkh, Samarkand, Nishapur, Merv, and Herat, astounding the simple Moslem conqueror, who knew only his sublime solitary Allah, with her rival observatories and libraries, from Tartary to Babylon, — such were some elements of the situation before us. How inter-

pret this unspeakable uproar of tongues and swords, — this wild, tempestuous collision of beliefs? What was this whirl of fiery atoms, but a chaos awaiting its centripetal impulse from intense religious personality; some fresh solution for traditional names of duty in ages and tribes; some all-commanding cry of *Allâh-il-Allâh*, — "There is no God but God! Behold his Prophet!"

What made Islam was the law that the worship of persons shall press irresistibly towards the worship of One Person; and that revelation by a direct messenger, which is the proper exponent of that sovereignty, shall tend to clothe itself with increasing definiteness and exclusiveness of sway. It must show, in proof of its authenticity, the power to bring both soul and body, every faculty and function of man, under its positive decrees. Mahomet understood the logical necessities of his position, when he announced that a completer legislation than that of Abraham, Moses, or Christ had come to reorganize the world.

His prophetic cry and conquering sword were not the mere outbreak of an Arab fanatic, leading his desert hordes to raid on the civilized world. An instinct so powerful for seven centuries of civilization that it had deepened with every outward contradiction and defeat, had but come at last to speak with a clearness that could neither be ignored nor misunderstood. Even the Semite had been slow to reach the pure conception of one Supreme Will. But behind Mahomet's Allah lay the persistent hold of Judaism on the religious training of ten centuries, the later success of Christianity as its offspring, and the primitive cultus of a Saturnian Abraham, or of some other great Father of the Tribes from whom it was itself born.[1] True, the new Prophet clearly saw that Judaism had degenerated, till its old revelation was buried under perversions and disputes. Christianity had further

[1] See the interesting researches of Julius Braun.

depraved it by ascribing a Son to the Infinite Spirit, and by dividing His essence. "Forbear, ye who say Three instead of One; it shall be better for you." But Christianity had directly helped prepare his way. It had supplanted the pantheons of Greece and Rome with its one incarnate God. Its imperfect formulas of Divine Unity, such as they were, had exercised a wide influence throughout Western Asia by means of the Nestorian schools of Syria. These heretics had pushed their protest against the strictly orthodox Trinity with a missionary ardor worthy of men who had the ability to combine Greek philosophy with Christian faith, and to establish[1] the earliest theological institution in Christendom.[2] They were nearer to pure monotheism than the Church that had cast them out for denying that God could have a mother, as it hated Mahomet for denying that He could have a Son. They must have been in many ways unconscious furtherers of that stronger religious monarchism which was to oversweep the whole field of their labors. They could not fail to recognize in its summons the clear self-consciousness of an ideal, so long vainly sought by them in their internecine war of systems and creeds. More "helpers" were in the air than the great Arab knew, when he numbered his faithful *Ansâr* of Medina in the day of poverty and flight. In differing ways the Monophysite heresy helped him in Egypt, and the Arian in Spain. Their rapid expansion indicated how strong an effort was making to guard the unity of God from human alloy. The protest of reason against a divided will had been borne about Arabia on the dromedaries of a native king.[3] Every savage broil in the robber councils of the Church, where her bishops tore in pieces the sacred body of her God, helped the preacher of a judgment day for these Typhonic muti-

[1] At Nisibis. [2] Gieseler: *Ecclesiastical History*, ii. 149.
[3] Wright: *Christianity in Arabia*, p. 38. Assemani (*Biblioth. Orient.*, iii.).

lations. Widely separated and divergent tribes, unable to endure the logic of orthodoxy, found timely refuge under the religious banner of Islam, or at least under its military guardianship, from the bigotry of Byzantium and the ecclesiasticism of Rome. For aside from the one unqualified condition of accepting its claim to political tribute from all conquered tribes, Islam promised pure liberty of thought. Arabia itself had long been a place of refuge, as the desert has always been, for persecuted sects.[1] The fame of the old tribes of Yemen for religious tolerance was great in all lands. The intuitive clearness of the Mussulman idea of God made its very stringency a relief to an age oppressed by even more autocratic governments and creeds. Its summons was to the masses, even more than to scholars and theologians; for religious controversy was then, as afterwards in the fifteenth century in modern Europe, the most tremendous of social realities. The timeliness of its appeal was not shown most powerfully in silencing the logomachy of Byzantine churches and Persian schools, though its blade cut the knots of word-mongering polemics at a single blow; but, by gathering up the bewildered races into one political and social centre of absolute religious law, it proved itself the outgrowth of invincible demands, — a sublime step in the process of the ages. "Say to the common folk,[2] Will ye surrender yourselves to God?"

With the facility of social predestination, as well as the terrible earnestness of fanatical belief, Islam enforced the logical right of positive revelation to sway every human sphere. Like the old Babylonian monarchy, it justified its claim to represent a God of personal Will by uniting temporal and spiritual relations under a single uncon-

[1] Crichton's *Arabia*, p. 160.

[2] Palmer translates, "Pagans" or "illiterate people;" but the meaning is the same. — *Koran*, iii. 19.

ditional allegiance to His spoken decrees. The invincible laws of human reason, which this ideal would supersede, had here, as elsewhere, brought it to the crucial test which it involves, — just as Jewish theocracy had pushed for universal dominion, and Christian evolution was steadily marching to papal union of Church and State. Only the secularism of modern science, the ripe insight of modern psychology, can stay this logic of personal revelation by striking at the premise. But in the age of Mahomet it was the spontaneous movement of society, the inward necessity of reason and faith. He could not escape the resort to prescriptive legislation nor to the sword of the flesh. Wherever he carried his theological dogma and his religious faith, he must plant the State which it implied. If he had not obeyed the implication, he would simply have left the fulfilment to his successors. Hence the shallowness of the charge that he became an impostor when he resorted to the sword. A highly spiritual nature might resist all temptation to other than spiritual weapons to enforce the divine command; but a practical worker must confront the rebellious facts.

The social and political status was more than opportunity: it absolutely prescribed his way. The crossed swords of Rome and Persia were sinking from exhausted hands, when the flash of his keen scimitar smote them apart. To his Arab hosts, as they rose from the dust of the trampled battle-field of nations to hurl both empires under their feet, he cried, "We have made you a central people, that ye may bear witness to mankind."[1] They had already learned by trading and predatory relations the weakness of these unwieldy giants; and the contagion of such colossal rivalries stimulated their passion for universal empire.[2] This Arab raid was no sudden impulse. The curious reader will find in the vivid pages of Tabarî

[1] *Koran*, ii. 137.

[2] Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, p. 444.

the stirring story of border wars waged for ages by these indomitable tribes against the overshadowing monarchies on either side, of their continued part in the vast military expeditions sweeping back and forth across northern Arabia, and their alternating emotions as one or the other side proved victorious for the hour. They saw these mercenary hosts despoiling themselves and each other of unity, discipline, faith in leadership and destiny; dissolving under the treachery and neglect of corrupt courts. Their habits of raiding had familiarized them for centuries with the immense treasures gathered by Aryan and Turk in the great cities of Irak and Central Asia.[1] And when these capitals were no longer capable of defence against the cupidity of the strongest, their desert-hunger hardly needed the warrant of religious command to become irresistible. When the Prophet's announcement of a common law and right broke down the feuds of generations, it was not strange that they swept to the magnificent quarry from Bagdad to Balkh. It was no recent account that they were invited to settle with the Sassanian kings. It reached back through the long history of their own ancestral States of Ghazzan and Hira in Irak, of their immemorial possession of Damascus and Holwan, and the head-waters of the traditional Gân-Eden of their race. From the time of the Seleucidæ they had raided in northern Persia; and their expulsion by Ardeshîr and then by Shapûr, when he ravaged Arabia to the gates of Medina, and subjected it down to the shores of Yemen on the Southern Sea, was rankling in the poetic traditions of every tribe.[2]

Under such stimulation a whirl of discordant clans sprang at the call of revelation into instant nationality; an individualism unmatched in history was exalted into

[1] Wright: *Christianity in Arabia*, pp. 21, 25. For account of early Turkish conquests in Iran, see Vambéry, *History of Bokhara*.

[2] Wright: *Christianity in Arabia*, pp. 63, 69.

typical universality, in the world-mastering individuality of its God. In Allah was manifest to them the secret bond of their common past, — the identity of all Semitic revelations by Abraham, Moses, Jesus, — but in its last and highest form. It is true that this inspiration of nationality was initiatory only. Islam, like every other great religion, has used its birthplace only as the leverage of a moment; and the loyalty of the tribes to a common master was a transient, almost a vanishing, element in its magnificent success. The achievement of Mahomet was neither by local nor physical forces. Arabia was fit only to give birth to the faith, to nurse the Prophet; not to establish, nor even to observe, his law.[1] On the death of Mahomet it rose in general revolt, and Abû Bekr, through Omar, had to wage an exterminating war to protect the faith. Probably no Mussulman country has been so little influenced by his prescriptions. It was wholly unsuited to the Koranic legislation, both by physical conditions and traditional habits of life. It adhered to its older Sabean superstitions, to its intense individualism, to its jealousy of human control. In fact, the very exodus to world-conquest was almost as much an expulsion of Islam from its native soil as it was a product of that soil, and singularly lacked every sign of patriotic emotion. But no sooner did its trumpet sound the blast of Allah's judgment on the gods of the nations, than every political element was found to be awaiting it, and turned to the Prophet's grasp. The great empires were distracted by barbarian invasions from without, and by inward dissensions so hopeless that even heretical sects could only tear each other like hungry wolves.[2] In Spain, ecclesiastical and civil strife invited the Saracen from Africa, and gave Târik a Gothic kingdom in five days of war. Buddhism had no capacity to found a State; but it had taught the rude Mongols and Turks of Central Asia a cer-

[1] Eusch. *Urwelt*, iii. 88, 89.

[2] Gibbon, xlvi. xlvii. (Milman).

tain universality of faith and aim; and they hastened to supply its defects of constructive resources by the new religion of absolute monarchy and unlimited conquest. It was a swift and easy evolution from a Shaman Genghis to a Moslem Tamerlane.

Such being the historical necessities, it is not strange that a single generation did not pass, before the creed of the camel-driver of Mecca had mastered the thrones of the East; or that a single century bore it in triumph from the borders of China to the coast of Spain. The rapid growth of Christianity is still widely believed to be the evidence of its supernatural origin; and Gibbon's splendid demonstration of the adequacy of natural conditions, and not very ideal ones, to explain that process, was sufficient in its own substance, apart from its irritating indirectness of tone, to earn for the great scholar the name of infidel. But by the old logic, so completely refuted then and since, the far superior rate of Mahometan conquest would prove Mahomet's claim to miraculous aid more valid than that of Christ. In fact, both movements illustrate the same law of continuity in historic cause and effect. Only in the later religion the argument against substituting a supposed need of Divine interference for this continuous force of development becomes still more forcible.

We cannot fail to be reminded that the work of what supernaturalism contemns as "unaided human reason" is infinitely more marvellous than any effects which ignorance and fear have ascribed to miraculous power. Not the least of its achievements is the refutation of all claims to original revelation; the revealer himself being proved by its historical investigations to have contributed but an atom to the great reconstruction which his name represents, in comparison with the vast contemporaneous forces, spiritual and physical, centring in him. His contribution, equally dependent on these conditions with all the other phe-

nomena of the movement, consists mainly in the attachment of it to a personal claim, an imaginary official function, a temporary centrality, which is but a higher crest on the ever-changing oceanic wave. Herein is no derogation to his moral or spiritual greatness, which has its power over the course of history; but limits are set, and the law of its production is the same as that of every other spiritual force, inseparable from the whole human process, — just as the noblest tree is not the creation of a deific stroke, but the product of a mere seed, and a slow integration of every elemental force through cosmic law. And if he is surely merged at last, to impartial vision, in the great human demands and currents which produced his faith, is it not the height of illusion to merge the faith itself and its whole historic destiny in him?

No personal biography, and no study of the supposed beginnings of any positive religion, can ever fix the genesis of a moral principle or spiritual ideal. As well believe that God kneaded an Adam out of dust on some given morning, as that Moses, or Buddha, or Jesus, or Mahomet, brought a new revelation of truth or duty directly from His hand. No speech, nor writing, nor wonderful work, can teach men anything that was not already seeking expression in their minds and consciences, and shaping itself from their own resources into the very word they deem God's message, — the very Life that wins their love and awe. Mahomet's expectation to make the world the kingdom of his God, the promise and the power of his inspiration to plant it above all the fallen thrones of the earth, were aided and in no slight degree created by the push of the living humanity to which he appealed. This was the secret of his victory, the legitimate and inevitable next step, — a piece of nature and necessity. When the world scorns and crucifies a prophet's message, he sees the deeper soul within the world, that confesses the truth and contradicts

the crime. The facts may refute him; but the deeper fact is the instinct of his genius that cannot be deceived. The age that bore him bids him be of cheer: It is for me you are made; you are my purpose; you only are indispensable to me. More explicable to the thoughtful student than to himself is the conqueror's mood. When the actual voice of his time is gathered up for him, naturally enough, into the command of an omnipotent Will, could there be room for any issue but intensest conviction and its conquest of the world? To the depression of the conquered Jew, the Roman world offered no gleam of religious light, no refuge but an ideal kingdom of God. Hence the quietism of Jesus, looking to the destruction of existing things and a new creation beyond. But to the desert-exaltations of the free Arab, the kingdoms of the world, rent and falling asunder, were themselves seed-ground waiting for the new creation at his hand. Hence the plunge of his soul into instant civil and political construction, with such weapons, such policies, such prescriptive autocracy as it involved.

These general facts and principles may serve to introduce our study of that extraordinary personage with whose name and religion the history of Iran has been identified for the last thousand years.

Mahomet's system and summons contained nothing essentially original, or even unfamiliar to his countrymen. His very idea of a prophet—as not merely a messenger from God, but as intrusted with His *written* message—was simply a traditional belief of the whole Semitic race. It is true that his names for function and for book were probably imported by him out of Hebrew into Arabic;[1] and it was the common opinion of the tribes in his time that no great prophet had ever been born upon their soil.[2] Yet that Arabia was soon to have her turn, was a current expectation among her numerous reformers and seekers

[1] Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam*, p. 225.

[2] Masûdi, chap. vi.

for new light. In that generation there were many eyes open to the Hebrew and Christian masters, and to the religious needs of their own land.[1] The vague sense of solitary omnipotent Will haunted that desert atmosphere. In Mahomet it did but grow to a palpable distinctness, an instant intimacy and command.

The *unity of God* was a golden ore embedded in Arabian memory and faith. Mahomet learned to track it through manifold ancestral veins; and it seemed that wherever he struck the soil, its fires of judgment and mercy sprang forth to tell their tale. Long before his day the pilgrims to Mecca were wont to pray to Allah, in every real emergency, as the one all-sufficient help.[2] There was a highest sheikh among troops of lower gods.[3] Of these there were at least three hundred and sixty whose images stood around the Kaaba,— of all shapes, animal, vegetable, mineral; and many more within it, — among them Abraham, Jesus, and even Mary his mother.[4] Of an impassive and sceptical temper in matters of worship, the Arabs had evidently reached a broad indifference to special names and forms. Yet Mahomet rightly assumed that these were secondary in the popular conscience, as well as in the belief of the Koreish tribe, the temple guardians; and so held these men guilty in not immediately casting them down before the new call to spiritual worship. What other gospel did he offer them than that which Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, as well as their own prophets of warning, had received from the Eternal? We have no sure means of testing the truth of the traditions from which Mahomet derived his largely legendary stories of the sins and penalties of early Arab tribes. We have no accounts of Arabia, deserving any credit, earlier than four

[1] Ibn-Khaldûn. Caussin de Perceval: *Essai sur l' Hist. des Arabes*, i. 322.
[2] Deutsch: *Islam*, p. 31.
[3] Sprenger: *Das Leben d. Mohammad*, i. 15.
[4] Caussin, i. 175, 198.

or five centuries before Christ, and then only for the Himyaritic kings of the South; while the Koreish, Mahomet's own tribe, appears distinctly only just before the Christian era. But from the oldest times known, worshippers of a Supreme God had mingled on the soil; tribes had been forcibly converted to Judaism; the Talmud itself was to no small extent Arabian in its associations and contents.[1] It has been lately maintained by archæologists that the ancient worship of Saturn was first transformed on this soil into that of Abraham, and so became the root of Hebrew monotheism.[2] This theory is at least quite as probable as that of a recent historian, who, on the strength of Bible genealogies, traces all monotheistic tendencies in the Arabs to a primitive revelation by Abraham, of which we have no account outside of the Bible, and no hint save in a few Koranic legends.[3] Better foundation may exist for the story of the introduction of idolatry into Yemen in the third century, and of its expulsion soon afterwards by Jewish influence. The dethronement of a king of that country by Rome and Abyssinia for his persecution of Christianity, in the sixth century, is a matter of history.[4] All these facts indicate little for a purely monotheistic religion. The Semitism of Arabia probably followed a course of development similar to that of the Hebrews, never reaching the pure idea of Divine Unity till its latest phases. These, however, had certainly appeared before the birth of Mahomet, in a class of reformers of whom I shall speak in a moment.

It is certain that Mosaism and Christianity were familiar to the Arabs through their unhealthy offshoots throughout whole districts of the peninsula, and through ancient settlements, the caravan trade with Syria, and the incessant mi-

[1] Deutsch: *Islam*, p. 34.

[2] Braun: *Gemälde der Mohamm. Welt.*

[3] Muir: Introduction to *Life of Mahomet*, cxvi. cxxvii.

[4] Caussin de Perceval, i. 90–94. Abûlfeda, p. 137. Tabarî: *History of Sassanianism* (Nöldeke), p. 178–185. Muir: Introduction to *Life of Mahomet*, chap. iii.

gration of tribes. They were even in possession of courts and States. There was a Christian bishopric in Himyar in the age of Constantius; [1] and whole tribes were probably of Jewish origin. North and south of the keen traders' path across the desert, in Syria and in Egypt, Monophysite, Nestorian, and orthodox were waging their internecine wars about the unity of God and of Christ. Even where the two older forms of monotheism had made little impression, the local and tribal gods were losing their hold. Sharastânî, in his "Book of Religious Sects," clearly describes the religious consciousness of the tribes. Some denied a creator and a resurrection, and taught that everything was born and died by Nature's force; others recognized a Creator, but denied resurrection; others worshipped idols. Some inclined to Judaism, some to Christianity, some to Sabeanism, directing their affairs by planetary influences. Some honored angels, some demons.[2] Mahomet's first sympathetic relations were with Jewish and Christian believers, among whom he naturally found readiest refuge and encouragement.[3] But this was of short duration. He owed more, in the sequel, to the prevailing decay of faith in the old polytheism, and to the semi-rationalistic expectations of a higher positive motive and a more consistent law. He can hardly be said to have derived his inspiration from the Bible, however much his style may resemble now Jeremiah's and now that of Jesus. It has the authoritative, yet sympathetic and yearning tone of Semitic prophecy everywhere. His knowledge of the Old and New Testaments was apparently at second or third hand, and worked over in the heats of his own intense conflict. The little volume of Sir W. Muir, entitled "Islam," in which he attempts to prove an intimate

[1] Asseman (*Biblioth. Orient.*, iii.). Wright's *Arabia*, p. 35.

[2] Abûlfeda: *History of Ante-Islamism* (Lat. Fleischer), bk. vi. p. 181.

[3] Sura vi. 85. Sprenger: *Das Leben d. Mohammad*, ii. 153–180 (from Ibn Ishâk).

acquaintance with these older Scriptures by Koranic references and quotations, is a very curious specimen of special pleading, and amounts to nothing more than this,—that Mahomet constantly charged his countrymen with the knowledge of earlier revelations in writings, which had testified of him to the Jew and the Christian, and which had been twisted from their meaning, and had lost their saving power. But with all his acquaintance with the general outline of the Pentateuch, there is only one passage in the Koran that agrees *verbatim* with one in the old Bible. It is extremely doubtful whether he ever saw a copy of either Testament.[1] Charges of perversion, made against him, are of the vaguest kind, and mere denunciations of the crime in general terms. The only definite instance[2] of it sufficiently proves his ignorance; and his allusions to divine judgments on disobedient tribes in old time show his habit of freely filling up the pages of his unknown Scriptures with national traditions or tales derived from other sources, — Talmudic, or Jewish Christian, — with no other warrant than their fitness to serve his inspired purpose.[3]

The supreme necessity of man's obedience to the providential Will made the whole world its parable. So the "illiterate" Prophet flamed with exhaustless type and symbol out of a past of which his knowledge seems incomprehensible. To one who held the secret key, that "God only knows the numbers and the times," there could

[1] See especially Sura vii. xii. xx. 114–120; xxi. 105; liii. 39.

[2] In Sura lxv. 6, where, in allusion to the promise of a Paraclete in John, xvi. 7, he mistakes the word, wrongly spelt, for the corresponding word in Arabic (*Ahmed*), and insists on its having been so written in the original text, as a prophetic reference to himself. See Rodwell's *Koran*.

[3] Witness especially the stories of Moses's journey with a mysterious angel, whose mission is to rebuke his impatience by apparent crimes, shown afterwards to be Providential blessings (xviii., compare Parnell's *Hermit*); of Abraham rebuking his father for idolatry (xix. 45); of the warning given to Adam against Iblis, and of God's relenting towards him after his fall, so taking off the primal curse (xx. 117–120); of Sâmariy, who tempted the Israelites to worship a calf (xx. 90). We may add the beautiful tale of Abraham's conversion from idolatry of the elements (vi. 74–79), and that of Mary's deliverance of her child under a palm of the desert (xix.).

be no difference of legends sacred and profane. His Scriptures welcomed the secular myths of the Seven Sleepers, the Queen of Sheba, the search of Dhul'karnain for the fountain of life in mythic darkness, and the building of the wall against Gog and Magog.

We cannot suppose an acquaintance with the Christian books in one who makes the Gospel promise rewards to those who fight and slay in its defence, and who mistakes Mary the mother of Jesus for Miriam the "sister of Aaron."[1] No Arabic version of the Bible existed in his time, and he could read no other language than his own. What he may have heard from his Jewish companions at Medina concerning the Hebrew writings, especially as he quotes sentences from great Rabbins who had visited the schools of their countrymen in Arabia, it is not now possible to say.[2]

Of his supposed teachers, the monk Sergius and the semi-Christian Jew Waraka, to the former of whom Dean Stanley ascribes his knowledge of Christian truth, we may be said on the whole to know nothing.[3] It would be as well for Christianity not to make it responsible for the apocryphal stories related of Jesus in the Koran.[4] Mahomet's continuity was not so much with Christianity as with post-Christian Judaism. "When the Talmud was completed," says the best Jewish authority on the subject, "the Koran was begun. *Post hoc, propter hoc.* . . . The Hebrew, the Greek, the Aramaic phases of monotheism, the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Targum and the Talmud, were each in their sphere fulfilling their behests. The

[1] Sura xix. 29.

[2] Deutsch: *Islam*, p. 35. Sprenger thinks a very limited literature, in part apocryphal, in the Arabic language, but in Hebrew letters, existed in Arabia before Mahomet. His proofs of this opinion are very slight. But he shows that it was after the exile to Medina and his connection with the Jews at that city, that the prophet's revelations have most to say of the Bible story. — Sprenger: *Das Leben d. Moh.* ii. 285.

[3] Stanley: *History of the Eastern Church*, p. 366.

[4] See Sprenger: *Das Leben d. Mohammad*, i. 124.

times were ripe for the Arabic phase."[1] Sprenger's conjectures — that the connecting point between Jewish and Arab monotheism is to be found in Essenic and Nazarean settlements scattered over the northern or Nabathean deserts, that the old Arabian sage and poet Lokmân was no other than the Jewish sectary Elxai, and that Islam itself sprang from certain free-thinking Essenes who had lost the knowledge of the Bible — have little special proof to recommend them.

But Mahomet was preceded by a line of native poets who more or less forcibly proclaimed Allah as above all gods; by voices in the wilderness announcing the approach of a fresh revelation of his will; and by a class of strict Unitarians, who hovered between Judaism, Christianity, and a sceptical rationalism very natural to the Arab mind. These Hanîfs (or "converted") were Mahomet's forerunners, his teachers, his intimates, some of them his rivals, even his foes.[2] This name, as signifying one who had lost the true faith and fallen to heathenism, was applied to them by the Jews, who did not like being held responsible for their free-thinking, and dreaded their criticism on themselves. The Hanîfs claimed to revive the old creed of Abraham, and called themselves Sabeans.[3] Perhaps the fine legend of Abraham's conversion from star and sun worship, mentioned above, told in the sixth Sura, was derived from them. More than one of them had shaken off the dust of the Kaaba, and sought the primitive law of Abraham and its less idolatrous shrines.[4] There are records of Mahomet's personal acquaintance with twelve of them before his assumption of the prophetic call.[5] Islam is generous in its recognition of his indebtedness to other men. It has remembered

[1] Deutsch: *Islam*, p. 10. Sprenger: *Das Leben d. Mohammad*, i. 35, 43, 93.
[2] Palmer's translation.
[3] Deutsch: *Islam*, p. 38.
[4] Sprenger, i. 110, 118.
[5] Rodwell's Koran, Preface, xvi.

a cry of Zeyd to the All-merciful for forgiveness, as one who had been beguiled by idol-worship, and having found it was but a spectre of the night, rejoiced to see clearly and to feel his withered boughs revive. He had even summoned the Koreish to accept Islam before the Prophet himself had spoken.[1] He had anticipated the Koran in denouncing the sacrificial feasts of the temple and the savage rite of burying children alive; had drawn out the victims with his own hands and restored them to their parents.[2] He was not satisfied with Judaism or with Christianity. Omeyyah even claimed to be the coming deliverer, and at first refused to recognize the master. These were men after Mahomet's own heart, and he begins by making himself one of them. He is ready to believe of two, at least, that they are destined to create churches of their own in heaven. To the whole line of old believers, of whom they were the representatives in his day, he accords the name of Moslem.[3] He puts himself on their ground of radical free-thought, saying that "Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian, but a pure Hanîf, who did not add gods to God."[4] The chronicles indeed claim for him a long and noble spiritual descent. El Masûdi[5] has a full chapter (much of it legendary, doubtless) on the confessors of the true God between Christ and Mahomet, martyrs and saints and heroes. He tells of Khâled, who smote the altars of fire-worship, and whose daughter, hearing Mahomet preach that "the Eternal only is God," said, "Those are my father's own words;" of Asad, Abu Karib, who believed in the prophet seven centuries before his coming; of Koss, on whom Mahomet prayed for the blessing of God's bounty; of Omeyyah, whose strange power compelled the Koreish themselves

[1] Sprenger, i. 42.
[2] Sprenger, i. 110, 116. Deutsch, p. 39. Braun, p. 13.
[3] Sprenger, i. 71.
[4] Sura iii. 60.
[5] *Meadows of Gold*, chap. vi.

to put the words, "In the name of God," at the beginning of all their writings.

The ancient "Rolls" to which Mahomet often refers were probably the so-called "Rolls of Moses," claimed to be in possession of the Hanîfs, and to have been given to primeval prophets, to the number of a hundred Suras, in letters of crimson like sunbeams, on green tablets, as the later Moslems affirm. It has been strongly doubted whether they were much earlier than his own time.[1] They are quoted in the five verses of his eighty-seventh Sura, and perhaps referred to in the pure monotheism of the fifty-third.[2] Here he may have found those stories of old-time tribes destroyed for their sins, which may have been founded on early wars and migrations, but are explicable enough among the desert ruins of the old cities of Hadramaut. Although Mahomet afterwards rejected these Hanîfite "Rolls," as he did the Jews and Christians of his day, he must have drawn on some such records for much of his material in enforcing the universality of Allah's dealing with men.

In this time of dissatisfaction with the current forms of faith, it was natural that the sceptical Arab mind should have little respect for the multiplied images of the Kaaba, which had too evidently become merely profitable investments for families who had long been their official curators. Doubtless still retaining certain social uses for the town-people, these dead stones could have little meaning for the free Bedouins, the independent tribes, the poetic, passionate individualists of the desert, except so far as they still recalled the primitive fetichism of litholatry, of which the legend of Jacob's pillow was a theistic outgrowth. They could surely better appreciate the Prophet's taunts than the perquisites of the Koreish officials.

Of the reaction now described, Mahomet's intense mono-

[1] Sprenger, i. 57.

[2] Rodwell, p. 27.

theism was a natural product. He dwells especially on the wrangling of religious sects, each utterly forgetful of the one God above them all. What a spectacle were the hates of Jew and Christian, the savage wars of Nestorian and Monophysite!

"To Jesus and other apostles we gave manifest signs; and if God had pleased, their followers would not have fallen into these disputes. But God doeth what He will!"[1] "Mankind was but one people, and God sent them prophets of warning and glad tidings, and the Book of Truth to settle all disputes. Yet none disputed like those to whom the Book had been sent; for they were filled with jealousy of each other."[2] "O people of the Book, why wrangle about Abraham? Why contend about that whereof ye know nothing?"[3]

His reproaches show that he sought only to recall his people to the service of One whom they already knew. He pretended to no message from an unheard-of Power or Name, but chose the highest god of the existing faith, specially associated with those benevolent uses to which a portion of the religious offerings were devoted,[4] — the god whose name was kindred with the old Semitic El, who was more widely recognized than any other tribal god, and probably the only one of whom no image had ever been made. At the opening of every Sura of the Koran stands the same invocation: "In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Just."

Nor were the doctrines with which this name was now invested originated by Mahomet. His eschatology was Talmudic and Pârsî; his angelology, the legacy of the desert. His Satan was Christian, the natural foil to an equally intense personification of good. His Jesus, though tinged with the Gnostic and Docetic conceptions which had come to be very widely mingled with Christian doctrine, was, after all, just a messenger of God after the old

[1] Sura ii. 254. [2] Sura ii. 209. [3] Sura iii. 59.
[4] Palmer's translation of Introduction, p. xii. *Koran*, Sura vi. 137.

Semitic pattern, made like other men, — for "it beseemeth not God to beget a Son."[1] His system of prayers, alms, fasts, pilgrimages, was borrowed from existing customs; the strange barbaric rites and forms go back to old Sabean planetary worship; the three daily devotions and turning to Jerusalem were Christian.[2] Abûlfeda enumerates all of them as practised among the Arabs traditionally, and as sanctioned by the prophet.[3] But Allah must give new interpretation to the whole. "Eat," said he, "of what has been sanctified by the Holy Name."[4] So the early Christians avoided meat that had been offered to idols. It was in what entered into the mouth that the Semite had always found his broadest symbol of defilement or of purity. Mahomet kept to these old instincts of his race. He refused afterwards to make a Kebla of a Jewish city; but he substituted Mecca, a nearer and more familiar shrine.

His morality, the constant fuel of his fiery zeal, was that of all good men in his day. He ascribed it wholly to the older prophets, and enforced it in their name. "Verily Abraham and Jacob and the tribes have passed away; they have the reward of their deeds; of these you shall not be questioned, only of your own."[5] "Every soul shall bear the good and the evil for which it has labored; and God will burden none beyond its power."[6] Yet the deeds required are the same.

"Worship God alone; be kind to kindred and servants, orphans and the poor; speak righteously to men, pray, and pay alms." "Grumble not at your parents; with humility and tenderness say, O Lord, be merciful to them, even as they brought me up when I was helpless." "Abandon the old barbarities, blood-vengeance and child-murder, and be united as one flesh;" yet, "let punishment for bloodshed be eye for eye." "Do thy alms openly or in secret; for both are well." "Give of that which hath been given you, before the day cometh when there shall

[1] Sura xix. 36.

[2] Sura ii. 192–196. Caussin de Perceval: *Essai sur l'Hist. des Arabes*, i. 113, 198, 203, 269. Sprenger, i. 78.

[3] Abûlfeda, p. 181. [4] Sura vi. 118. [5] Sura ii. 135. [6] Sura ii. 286.

be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession." "Wouldst thou be taught the *steep* (path)? It is to ransom the captive, to feed the hungry, the kindred, the orphan, and him whose mouth is in the dust. Be of those who enjoin steadfastness and compassion on others." "Woe to them that make show of piety, and refuse help to the needy." "Make not your alms void by reproaches or injury." "Forgiveness and kind speech are better than favors with annoyance." "Abandon usury." "He who spendeth his substance to be seen of men, is like a rock with thin soil over it, whereon the rain falleth and leaveth it hard. But they who expend their substance to please God and establish their souls, are like a garden on a hill, on which the rain falleth and it yieldeth its fruits twofold; and even if the rain doth not fall, yet is there a dew."

"Stand fast to justice, bearing witness before God, —whether it be against yourselves, or your parents, or kindred, whether the party be rich or poor. God is nearer than either. Therefore follow not passion, lest you swerve from truth." "Covet not another's gifts from God." "There is no piety in turning the face east or west, but in believing in God only and doing good." "Make the best of all things; enjoin justice and avoid the foolish; and if Satan stir thee to evil, take refuge in God."

"The birth of a daughter brings dark shadows on a man's face." "But to slay your children, even for fear of want, is a great wickedness. For them and you we will provide." "God hath given you wives that ye may put love and tenderness between you." "Divorce is allowed twice; on conditions, a third time and no more; but let wives be kept honorably, or put away with kindness." [The Koranic laws concerning treatment of women in divorce are of better humanity and regard for justice than those of any other Scriptures.] "Reverence the wombs that bare you." "Adultery is foul." "Let the believer restrain his eyes from lust; let women make no display of ornaments, save to their own kindred."

"Know ye that this world's life is a cheat; the multiplying of riches and children is like the plants that spring up after rain, rejoicing the husbandman, then turn yellow and wither away. In the next life is severe chastisement, or else pardon from God and His peace."[1]

These sentences are introduced in detail to show how entirely the moral ideal of the new gospel was set in the

[1] Sura ii. 77; xvii. 24, 25; ii. 173, 255, 275; xc. 12; cvii. 4–6; ii. 265–67, 279; iv. 133, 134; ii. 173; vii. 198, 199; xvi. 60; xvii. 33; xxx. 20; ii. 229–231; lxv.; xvii. 34; xxiv. 31; lvii. 19, 20.

common-sense of duty and the familiar instincts of love. In the general tone, they might have been the warnings of Isaiah or Joel, or the tender appeals of Jesus. The message of the prophet to practical conduct is the same in all times when prophets are possible. There is a difference in the extent to which legislation is mingled with the prophetic function, naturally to the detriment of the ideal freedom and breadth of the latter; yet sometimes, as in Mahomet's case, it serves to prove a practical energy and helpfulness in meeting the stern practical limits to its social working, which "inspiration" is wont to ignore. Mahomet did not at first incline to this administrative function, and it was only developed by the necessities of those with whom he had to deal. His special dealings with rites and customs were always ameliorative, yet in ways of which the past afforded him at least the suggestion. Those relating to women sprang naturally out of many elements of equality and chivalrous respect for her sex, as to the choice of a husband, and the estimate of chastity, in old Arabian life.[1] Thus polygamy was regulated and limited in the Koran, though it could not be abolished; and slavery was fast bound to every kindly instinct evolved by the patriarchal household, though it must still stand in Islam and elsewhere for a thousand years.

The darker features of these ethics, their retaliatory and penal precepts, were also out of the past. Mahomet invented none of them. They were the necessities of obedience to a supreme personal Will in the theological ideal, or of emergencies which made war in its behalf a matter not of self-defence only, but of familiar duty and desire. His ethical sanctions are similar to those of other Semitic teachers, — appealing, though not exclusively, to the fear of direct judgment by Almighty Will, or to the hope of definite rewards; and to the imagination plunged, as with

[1] Hellwald: *Culturgesch.* pp. 471, 472.

the Hebrew, in a sea of physical symbolism, where every actual and familiar fact finds an ideal significance, but directed mainly to that invisible future existence for which the Hebrew had little sense. This imagery of actual life, though necessarily sensuous, is not sensual, but controlled, and even transfigured, by moral and spiritual purpose. It is a gross error, as we shall hereafter see, to charge Mahomet's success to the use of sensual appeals. The harems of Paradise know "no vain discourse, no charge of sin, but only the cry, 'Peace, Peace;' beauty that shrinks from tempting, and wine that hurts not the sense;"[1] while the poisonous fruits and boiling drinks of hell are the bitterness of remembered sin. All this ethical meaning of reward and penalty is rooted only in sovereign decrees,—"a grasp of the Lord's hand" to guide or to mislead. The very difference between right and wrong, not less than the consequences of conduct, is an immediate product of His will. "The blessed shall abide in heaven forever, with whatever imperishable boon He may please to add; and the wicked shall abide in their place also while heaven and earth last, *unless He shall otherwise will;* for verily He doeth as He doth choose."[2] So absolute is this worship of the personal Will, that in spite of moral predestination an unbeliever is held as the chief of sinners,—as one who must have voluntarily rejected the truth. It is true that, like Dante and Swedenborg, he hesitated at no serviceable outward image of invisible realities, and relentlessly piled their terrors upon his foes. His argument for immortality rests on the same Semitic premise,—because God wills it. He can raise man to a "new creation" after death,—the old *a fortiori* proof of Paul and early Christianity. "Cannot He who first created you restore you even from bones and rubbish?" Of whatever importance it might be to

[1] Sura lvi. 19, 24, 25.

[2] Sura lxix. 26–34; lvi. 40–50; xxxvi. 65; vi. 130; xi. 109, 110.

prove a future life in order to enforce the incessant promises and warnings of his message, no evidence seems to have been thought necessary beyond such appeals to an arbitrary Omnipotence, and here and there an image from natural analogy, — the spring, the reviving desert, the morning after the night. There is no resort to the intuitions and yearnings of the soul, to its sense of unfinished work and unused powers. The sum of all is, that God's power to do what He wills involves His doing what we desire and threatening what we fear. And the same premise has had the same effect in closing up the argument for immortality wherever it has formed the basis of religious belief. There was no need for Mahomet to present any other; it was not in his Semitic nature, nor in his Arab environment, that any other should even be suggested. Yet the preference of the eternal to the transient is, after all, here, as in all ethics and religion, the primal motive to which the preacher appeals with power; and the experiences of the desert needed no argument to justify that appeal.

Most significant in these ethical relations of Mahomet to his times and their demands is the democratic tone of his message. Could the voice of the religious idea in its most awful simplicity, concentrating the confused fragments of personal worship, the broken lights of monotheistic tendency in that world of wrangling creeds and oppressive institutions, into the commanding exclusiveness, the supreme self-assertion, of Semitic deity, lord of life and death, sword at once of spirit and of flesh, do less than bring all heads to a level, all privilege to the dust? "No religion," it has been well said, "is so completely the *vox populi* as Islam."[1] Away with every priest or sovereign who shall dare to make an idolater of the simplest soul, or stand between him and that jealous

[1] Sprenger, iii. 177.

Will which could suffer no rival, and knew no distinction in its dealings with men. Khosrû Parvîz, the Sassanian monarch, had tried in vain to put down his nobles by lifting up the poor. But here was One before whom king and noble alike were vanity, throned in the conscience of the least of their subjects, and taking up with unheard-of inquisition the cause of the helpless and oppressed. It seemed that in the tongue and sword of this Prophet

> "God said, I am tired of kings,
> I suffer them no more;
> Up to my ear the morning brings
> The outrage of the poor."

It abolished privilege of sex in matters of religious function. It set aside primogeniture. It denounced usury, and promised double return to the giver to the poor and the wayfarer, in the love of God.[1] It forbade claims to absolute ownership of man. It levelled the warring creeds and systems of Biblical authority in the name of One who had taught mankind the use of the *pen* itself, — the pen, greatest of levellers, giver of Bibles to men. By the pen Mahomet swears; by the pen records every man's doings; by the pen reveals their destiny at the last day. This democratic thunder could not have rolled from east to west and west to east over the world, as it did for a hundred years, had not the atmosphere been charged, and waiting, in all the nations. We have seen how it had been developed in reactions from Sassanian disintegration, in the Manichæan heresy, in Christian antipathies, and under the pressure of Roman tyranny and Byzantine corruption; while words which had long been sacred were shorn of their traditional authority and meaning. In Arabia we shall see the same impulse in a more directly productive form.

Most decisive in the point of view before us was the relation of Islam to the anthropomorphic conception of

[1] Sura xxx. 37, 38.

deity then in possession of the world. In Christianity, its logic had worked steadily downward; adding in the Trinity many new human relations, — personal, numerical, relative, — and tending to the dissolution of Divine Absoluteness in a humanly organized ecclesiastical institution. In Islam, anthropomorphic logic rose to its supreme ideal truth in the total self-adequacy of personal Will, firmly fixed as pure individuality, not to be violated by finite division or human representation. No person or church could possibly be in His express image; and even the prophet who bore His message could never be other than a mere man. Mahomet made no pretence of representing any but simple human nature.[1] It is evident that anthropomorphism, pushed to this conception of a pure self-identity of the will, has reached its extreme limit, and involves by way of compensation and reaction its correlated idea and its opposite pole, — the pure dependence of man on his own natural faculties for the pursuit and reception of truth. What did the withdrawal of the superhuman into *remotest individuality* have for the human but a like self-sufficiency in its own impassable limits? Some reliance there must be; if not on God, — an arbitrary, inaccessible Will, — then on what else but the keener effort of the human faculties to reach certainty of themselves? In this way I should explain at once the rapid tendency to speculation and scepticism in Mahometan history, and, in spite of the fatalism which attended this religion, the energy of its hold on the democratic tendencies of the age. For this appeal to universal humanity excluded all special relations with deity beyond a transient inspiration akin to genius. All semi-deities in human shape, for centuries multiplying their names and claims; all double or triple manifestations of godhead; all organically inspired classes, — were but delusions of idolatry, without a shadow of right

[1] Sura xviii. 110.

to hoard or to distribute the truth of God. He, and He only, speaks to all, to prophet and slave alike; nor is one, more than another, lifted above his human defects and needs by any divine message he is chosen to convey. This at least was the theory of Islam in its beginning; and the age so understood it, and hailed the new call to freedom. To the Jew, Mahomet allowed his theocratic idea, but purged away its nationalism, its priestly traditions and perversions. He left the Christian his God and Christ, but smote off the three heads of his Trinity, and reduced the Only Begotten to a member of the line of prophets.

"Verily Jesus is as Adam in the sight of God. He created him of the dust, and said 'Be,' and he was." "Forbear to say Three; it will be better for you. Believe in God and His apostles." "He is all in heaven and earth, and He is a sufficient helper." "He doth not command you to take the angels or the prophets as your masters. It beseemeth not a man and a prophet that he should say to his followers, 'Be ye worshippers of me.'" "God will not forgive the joining of other gods to Him. Yet they call upon goddesses, they invoke a rebel Satan."[1]

The democratic motive thus spontaneously emerging from the completest form of religious monarchism reveals the irony of self-destruction that awaits such belief; but the vast gulf which monarchism, and especially that of Islam, opened between man and his ideal, cheated the promised liberty of the human faculties at once of its resources and its fulfilment. These were to come, not in the worship of an absolutely separate Will, but in the cosmic science which should bring man and the universe into an inseparable whole.

Nevertheless, the emancipating force of Moslem religious ethics was mighty in its day, and it will be seen, in our study of the succeeding centuries, to have wrought momentous results. Its relations to monarchical theology

[1] Sura iii. 53; iv. 169; v. 76; ix. 31; iii. 73, 74; iv. 116, 117.

are noted here to show how deeply Mahomet's teaching was rooted in traditional beliefs.

But this indebtedness to the past must not be confounded with the current charge of borrowing largely from the faiths he spurned. With the exception of two or three Biblical expressions and parables which seem to be as natural to the Semitic Arab as to the Semitic Hebrew, hardly a trace of Christian phraseology is to be found in the Koran;[1] even the battle of the sects, raging in Arabia as well as elsewhere, contributes nothing to Mahomet's vocabulary. The bulk of his ideas, as we have seen, were inherited from many preceding faiths which had mingled in Arabian civilization; but they were not consciously borrowed, nor constructed into a second-hand system. Jew and Christian were to his sight perverters of a revelation older than that of either Testament, which had come in its perfection only to himself; and though he freely quotes both Moses and Jesus, it is never from their words as the sources of his own inspiration.[2] Of specific Christian doctrines, — depravity, atonement, and redemption, — or the great miracles of Christ, there is no recognition in the Koran. Even its predestination, scarcely differing from the Christian, is equally near to the Hebrew, and follows inevitably from his own religious conception of absolute Will. That bare unmodified reality was no basis for syste-

[1] Sura ii. 266–268; xciii. 6–9.

[2] Thus like Jesus he divides men at the last judgment to right and left, and ascribes to God alone the knowledge when that day shall come, and mourns over the many cities God has borne with and chastised (Sura lvi. 8, 9; xli. 47; xxii. 46). In the early part of his preaching only he uses the title, *Ar Rahmân*, — the Merciful, — in speaking of God (Sura xxv. 60–64). Sprenger strangely conjectures that he must have derived it from Christianity, and even that it means the Holy Spirit (ii. 198, 234). But it is used by him in the same breath with the rejection of Christian dogmas, and has commonly the force only of an adjective. It is possible that he dropped it in the fear that it might be taken as the name of another god than Allah; but that he should have meant it for the "Holy Spirit," the third person of the hated Trinity, is inconceivable. Sprenger, who is extremely inclined to trace his ideas of Islam to Christianity, has conceived a heretical Christian sect called *Rahmanists*, who taught Mahomet his early ascetic habits (ii. 202, 210). The term "Holy Spirit" is commonly used by the *Koran* to designate *Gabriel*, as the messenger of God to his prophet. Sura xvi. 104; ii. 81, 254; xvii. 87.

matic doctrine; all-sufficient is its instant inspiration, wiping out all schemes and plans wrought by the reasoning of those whose right was only to obey, — a reaction from ages of creed-making and of fighting for the authority of terms, to pure feeling, to self-surrender, to the instincts of love and fear, — the passion of resistless purpose and faith.

Let us, in fine, concentrate into a few of the Koranic sentences this grand central idea of Islam, the final result of a long evolution of the worship of personal Will through Assyrian, Median, Persian, Hebrew, and Christian forms, till it reached its culmination, to burst like a century-plant into flower, as if in a night, upon the world: —

"God! there is no God but He! The Living, the Eternal. No slumber seizeth Him. Whatsoever is in heaven or in earth is His. Who can intercede with Him but by His own permission? He knows what has been before, and what shall be after them; yet nought of His knowledge shall they grasp, but what He willeth. His throne reacheth over the heavens and the earth, and the upholding of them both burdeneth Him not." "He throweth the veil of night over the day, pursuing it quickly. He created the sun, moon, and stars, subjected to laws by His behest. Is not all creation and all empire His? Blessed be the Lord of the worlds!" "Say, He alone is God: God, the Eternal. He begetteth not, and He is not begotten; there is none like unto Him."[1] "Praise to Him, the compassionate, the merciful, king on the day of reckoning. Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide us on the straight path, — the path of those to whom Thou art gracious, with whom Thou art not angry; such as go not astray."[2] "He is the indulgent, the loving." "Against the evil in His creation I betake me to the Lord of the daybreak." "Thou needest not raise thy voice; for He knoweth the secret whisper, and what is yet more hidden."[3] "No leaf falleth but He knoweth it; nor is there a grain in the darkness under the earth, nor a thing green or sere, but it is recorded by itself. He taketh your souls in the night, and knoweth what the work of your day deserveth; then He awaketh you, that the set life-term may be fulfilled; then unto Him

[1] Sura ii. 256; vii. 52; cxii.

[2] Sura i. 1–11. This Sura is called the "Mother of the Book," the "All-sufficing." — Rodwell's Translation, *note*.

[3] Sura, lxxxv. 14; cxiii. 1; xx. 7.

shall ye return, and then shall He declare unto you what you have wrought." "What He wills, He doeth." "Whom He will He misleadeth, and whom He will He guideth. Spend not thy soul in sighs for the evil-minded [unbelievers]; God knoweth their doings." "Every man's fate have we hung about his neck, and on the last day shall be laid before him a wide-opened book." "By a soul, and Him who balanced it, breathing into each its own piety and its own sin, blessed now is he who hath kept it pure, and undone is he who hath corrupted it."[1] "There is no defect in His creation; repeat thy gaze, canst thou detect a flaw?" "There is no change in His dealing from of old." "Praise Him at evening and in the morning, at twilight and when ye rest at noon." "He quickeneth the earth when it is dead; so too shall you be brought to life." "As the heavens and the earth stand firm at His bidding; so hereafter, when at once He shall summon you from the earth, forth shall ye come." "Set then thy face, a true convert to the Faith which God hath made, and for which He hath made man."[2]

"When the sun shall be folded up, and the stars shall fall, and when the mountains shall be moved; when the she camels shall be left, and the wild beasts shall be gathered together; when the seas shall boil and souls be paired with their bodies; when the female child that was buried alive shall be asked for what crime she was put to death; when the leaves of the Book shall be unrolled, and the heavens be stripped away, and the fire of hell blaze forth, and Paradise draw nigh, — then shall every soul know what it hath done." "Who shall teach thee what the day of decision is?" "What knowledge hast thou [Mahomet] of the hour? Only God knoweth its period. It is for thee only to warn those who fear it." "What shall teach thee the inevitable? Thamûd and Ad treated the day of terrors as a lie. They were destroyed with thunderbolts and roaring blasts."[3]

Yet in this terrible Will there is the same tender care and pity that go with it in the Hebrew and Christian God. It says to Mahomet, who for forty years had followed the faith of his fathers, and in his youth had been left alone: —

"By the noonday brightness, and by the night when it darkeneth, the Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor hath He been displeased. Surely

[1] Sura vi. 59, 60; xlii. 48; xxxv. 9; xvii. 14; xci. 7–10.
[2] Sura lxvii. 4; xlviii. 23; xxx. 16, 17, 24, 29.
[3] Sura lxxxi. 1–15; lxxvii. 14; lxxix. 44, 45; lxix. 1–6.

the future shall be better for thee than the past; and in the end He shall be bounteous to thee, and thou shalt be satisfied. Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee a home; erring, and guided thee; needy, and enriched thee? As to the orphan, then, wrong him not; and chide not away him that asketh of thee, and tell abroad the favors of thy God." "Did ye think we had made you for sport, and that ye should not be brought back again to us?" "O our God, punish us not, if we forget and fall into sin; blot out our sins and forgive us." "Have mercy, for of the merciful Thou art the best." "The heavy laden shall not bear another's load. We never punished till we had sent an apostle." "This clear Book, behold on a blessed night have we sent it down for warning to mankind." "Not to sadden thee have we sent it to thee."[1]

The most striking fact concerning this climax of religious monarchism is the pure absence of all scientific evidence, all rational appeal, which it necessitated in its Prophet. The organ of an autocratic Will, which set aside all human conditions and interpretations by its very simplicity and finality, he could but assume its own boundless self-assurance, and allow the hearer no suspense of judgment, no choice of belief. Or, rather, he supposes that in every sane and honest mind all hesitation as to its primary right to instant obedience, and all doubt of the ethical laws to which it recalls mankind, have already settled into a frame of simple expectation, a waiting for the revelation it is about to repeat. The hearer knows that he ought to accept it, since it contains nothing new in principle, and that he deserves eternal punishment if he dares to reject it. The Christian had the same opinion of such as "blasphemed against the Holy Spirit." The fact of the Divine origin of the revelation is assumed as *indubitable*, and so the denial of its truth could only mean the rejection of God's will as such, for which Christianity knew no forgiveness; and Islam invented the taunts of hell out of a consciousness of having doubted God.[2] Such is the

[1] Sura xciii. 1–11; xxiii. 119; xliv. 1; xx. 1.
[2] Sura, lii. 14, 15; lv. 40–44. Matthew, xii. 31, 32.

logical issue of the worship of pure Will. I admit that Mahomet often refers to the character of his book in evidence that it could have only God for its author, — a point open, we might have supposed, to discussion. But this naïve admiration of the evidential force of his own production was itself an appeal to the previous moral experience of his hearers. It was, no doubt, well founded in the best ideal thought and faith of his day. So sure was he of the force of mere statement, that he believed it justified his refusal to appeal to miracles, necessary as these had been in previous apostles to enforce the belief of untutored men.[1] His Allah was too well known to his Arabs, — even to that fine literary instinct which he knew to have a decisive voice in all their judgments, — to require arguments of so little comparative worth that they had even failed to convince the ignorance of past generations. It is, after all, to be considered that the substance of his message, announced on the ultimate authority of God's will, was *really* ultimate in human experience itself, — the inevitable law of retribution; the claim of justice, of right, of humanity; the unity and integrity of the moral universe; and these remain endowed with the same positive authority in ages that are learning to recognize their independence of a predetermining Will. It is the true mark of the prophet, that Mahomet not only insists unswervingly on these as the essence of his message, but perpetually prefers to recognize the familiar phenomena of Nature and the duties of life as signs of the Divine presence, rather than resort to the miraculous for that purpose.[2]

The natural relations of Mahomet's vast conception of the personality of God with the atmosphere of his age is the only explanation of that amazing soberness and self-command with which he entertained his all-absorbing

[1] Sura xxvi. lxi. 6; v. 110.

[2] See especially the chapter on Divine Signs, entitled "The Greeks." Sura xxx.

visions. However terrible the shock to his reason at the first, the very utterance of his message, and the social effects produced by it, seem to have soon made the Suras easy of reception by his human weakness, ready to be patiently interwoven with the suggestions of his own mind. Nothing can be imagined more widely different from the results evolved from his ideal in later epochs. There is no mysticism or speculation in him: a strange ancestor for Sufism and pantheism on the one hand, for Aristotelian science on the other! No respect for mere letters or fine arts: a strange parent of Cordova and Bagdad, and the renaissance of scholarship in the Middle Ages! No tolerance of poetic culture: what a forerunner of more poetry perhaps than all other races, besides the Semitic, have produced! No appeal to the supernatural in himself; yet ere long the centre for a legendary lore as extravagant as that which has invested the person of Buddha. But in one respect this vast unmodified abstraction, which seemed to crush all human energies, struck forth instant flashes worthy of all its future powers; it made its Prophet an omnipotent leader of men, and stirred his followers to conquer the world. Such the significance of ideal unity in the days of its monarchic phase.

But the main sources of Mahomet's inspiration, the most direct and suggestive, remain for our study. So important a factor in the origin of those religions which have dictated the faith of civilization for fifteen centuries, deserves attention in some detail. Whether Arabia received him with understanding, or consigned the development of his faith to Syria and Persia, is not now the question. It could not have been accidental that the one supreme force of the epoch issued from the solitudes of that vast peninsula round which the tides of empire rose and fell. Every exclusive prophetic claim in the name of a sovereign Will has been a cry from the desert. The symbolic meaning

given to Arabia by the withdrawal of the Christian apostle to commune with a Power above flesh and blood, in Mahomet became more than a symbol. Arabia was itself the man of the hour, the Prophet of Islam its concentrated word. To the child of her exalted traditions, driven by secret compulsion out into the lonely places of the starry night, his mouth in the dust, the desert spoke without reserve: —

> "O thou, wrapped in thy mantle, arise and warn! Magnify thy God! purify thy raiment! flee the abominable thing! Stand up all night in prayer; repeat thy Koran with measured tone; for the words we send thee are weighty!" [1]

Heeren defines the desert steppes, over which the commerce of early time followed its perilous tracks, as "the ocean of Asia." But the lonely caravan had other than merely mercantile associations. It was the function of the desert to front the voyager with the direct sense of sovereign Will, as separate from its works, yet instant to warn, to command, to revive, and to destroy. It was one of Herder's boldest generalizations to credit the old desert life with that keen scent for minute observation of details, that passion for remote ramifications of thought, which characterized the later subtlety of Arab philosophy. However this may be, while certainly in a much larger degree the same conditions explain the raid and the ambush, the rivalries and the revenges of a too isolated tribal life, — their profoundest historic part has been to educate the monopolists of revelation, the egoists of spiritual authority. The desert was the mother of the Semitic temperament, prompter of its personal intuitions and exaltations, nurse of its autocratic deity and its imperious creeds.

"The nomad," says Ibn Khaldûn, "is nearer God than the settled man, because nearer Nature, more open and sensitive. Given to luxury and gain, the townsman de-

[1] Sura lxxiii. 1–5; lxxiv. 1–6.

generates: the nomad desires only what he needs." This preference is not the mere instinctive hate of the dweller in tents for the tiller of the ground and builder of States,—of Shem for Tubal-Cain; modern travellers bear testimony to the superior *morale* of the Bedouin tribes, and to the degeneracy of both sexes after a short residence in towns.[1] They describe a rare refinement in physical organization, a self-restraint and dignity of bearing, a pride in accurate speech,—even in the absence of reading and writing,—a delight in generous feelings and noble actions, which can be explained only by the unchanging consciousness of a supreme ideal law. The desert spaces fail not of symbols of that law: the bare horizon; the slow, sure movement of sun and stars; the sky stooping from its infinite remoteness close down without intervention to the earthly traveller; the mystery of the universe, boundless and one, without veil or refuge for body or soul,—are all direct contacts with overmastering laws, with stern realities of life and death. Temple, priest, or mediator, reliance on the help of man, or an instituted Church and State, are here impertinent and impossible. Everything is immediate revelation of unseen Will. The oasis springs amidst the sands, instantaneously quickened by the word of God; its palms are the longed-for men and angels sent to cheer the lonely march. Night, with its coolness and dews, a restful relief from the vast monotony of level spaces and far horizons, a sweet limit to weary eyes and reproof to eager hearts,—night, whose fountains of primeval light have gathered for all time around the silent watchers of the mysteries within them and without, is the God of the desert in his kindly aspect, as the burning day is his relentless wrath. "The very mirage," says Sprenger, "is a theophany. Allah is etymologically traced to it, as vision and gleam."[2] Recent

[1] Burckhardt: *Notes on the Bedouins*, i. 187. Geary, chap. xiv.

[2] Allah, according to Sprenger, is the shining vision, as of the mirage (Sprenger, i. 286). Palmer says it only means the God. Goldziher: *Mythology among the Hebrews*.

scholars find in this difference of the desert aspects of day and night the key to Semitic mythology, whose friendly forms are a reflection from the night-side of Nature, its hostile ones from those forces of the day on which the settled tribes depend. Much of this etymological induction is doubtless fanciful; but that night is the soul of the desert faith is indubitably shown by psychological necessities of a deeper kind. The nomad's retreat into his night-watches inevitably leads him into unbroken reverie, slowly concentrated and kindled into the enthusiasm of prophecy. When the distractions and illusions of the march have silently vanished, and the petty passions are stilled by the slow approaching and enfolding shadow of a world-purpose, the secret chamber of his own soul becomes the one listener for whom the universe speaks. Social relations or suggestions are not present to divide the burden or give it objective relief. In all Arabia, not one river runs that could draw off the thought to earthly distances for human strivings and divided desires; every stream is lost in the immeasurable sand. The response is an inward exaltation so intense that the very images that have beset the senses are absorbed and lost in its spiritual and moral heat. It is observable that Semitic religious poetry has fewer images of the desert in proportion to the degree in which the desert has been the source of its inspiration; in the Koran, for instance, they are much less conspicuous than in the Hebrew psalms and prophecies. Here and there Mahomet is reminded of the mirage as a symbol of sin, or of the sudden burst of fertility out of parched barrenness after a rain. But he is too much in earnest to dwell on natural imagery. "It does not beseem me to be a poet." Symbols have done their work in rousing his self-consciousness to the intensities of duty, to hope and fear, and awful command. They are transmuted into personality, — hidden fuel of his absolutism as Prophet of

the Will they have made known. Identity of subject and object is here completed and instructive. As he stands there on his desert rock, unmindful of physical surroundings, bent only on his message from One before whom the earth and the sky are but a grain of sand, we can hear the desert voices behind every accent of his warning and appeal. Between the lines of the Koran we read the inexplicable mystic lights and shadows; the terrible contrasts of life and death; the shifting sand-column, the unswerving simoom, directed by invisible Will upon pure destruction; the hopeless wastes, the bitter waters, the dry bones of long-perished caravans,—all this has made the desert symbolic of absolute evil, of theological wrath and eternal death. And, on the other hand, the life-giving springs; the palm with its feet in burning sands and its head in the light of heaven; the herbs whose saltness is medicinal; the sweet returns of men for ages to the same fountains and shades; the joyous rush of living creatures, when the great river bursts from its mountains and fills the bed long dry with rolling, resistless waves; the grand uprise of the king of day out of the dissolving gloom, and the cloudless autocracy of his march, — all this has made the same desert a rebuke to those old dreams of absolute evil and Divine hate. In that anxious verge of hope and fear on which the message runs, that sharp stress on the moment's call and on the fate that goes with the instant moral act, we can recognize what the Prophet has learned from the deception of the mirage, — the desert's penalties for delusive hopes, the hallucinations of ear and eye in pathless wastes; from the mutterings of demons far off or close by, their spectres surrounding the fever-stricken pilgrim; from the voices of ruined cities of an unknown past, half-buried in sand, and whispering of penal whirlwinds and earthquakes that have swept them away forever; and withal, from the concentration of every sight and sound on the little caravan or

lonely rider, till the world has become one mighty reflex of a more or less complete egoism of religious function and fanatical faith in its dictates as the voice of God.

In this introversion of the symbol there is nothing of contemplative thought. The roving life, the undisciplined feeling and will, the physical susceptibilities, forbid it; and these undoubtedly help explain the sceptical character of the Arab mind, where, instead of rising into enthusiasm, it reacts from the pressure of Nature into a realism all the more cautious and analytic. But if the Arab is not contemplative, he is all the more certainly an impassioned prophet whenever the constant presence of the Inexplicable, the Inevitable, the Overruling, the Changeless among fleeting forms, seizes his imagination and inspires his feelings. The natural outcome is that absolute monotheism in which we discern not only the type and reflex of intense individualism in the conscious will, but the ceaseless suggestion of the desert horizon, of sky-marches, and of unchangeable facts and laws.

The germ of the Prophet of this monotheism is that total self-reliance and self-sufficiency which civilization destroys. To this very hour the desert is its natural soil. The Arab is and has always been the Epictetus of Nature; to him the Stoic creed is practicable, — that the happy man is he who can dispense with every possession. His dependence is reduced to the minimum, — to camel, water-skin, mat, tent, and sword. All beyond this is accidental, a badge of servitude to things. "Riches confer no influence here; the sheikh lives and dresses like his meanest follower. Even the Emir dares not command or scold." The Turcomans say, "We are all equal; every one is king."[1] Here is the pride that makes sharp critics of poetry, without schools or even books; that walks in the open night as master of the heavens, without astronomy;

[1] Burckhardt: *Notes on the Bedouins*, i. 65, 72, 74, 112, 117, 374.

that makes its centaur-life strong and beautiful, without mechanic arts; that girds even woman with rights and dignities unknown to high civilization.[1] What need of wealth or rank to him who owns the desert world! What a hut is civilization to this mount of vision, camping-ground, council-field, sea of adventure, table of hospitality, tryst-ing-place for song and tale and interchange of mysterious love! Here is manhood in full and free accord with its outward conditions. "Voyaging is victory," says the desert proverb. Here the bravest may not loiter, nor waste his strength, nor fall back in ease; he must battle till his presence, like Antar's, is a spell and a host. The modern traveller scents the whole Saracenic history in the desert atmosphere. "Here," exclaims one, "your *morale* improves; you become frank and cordial. Your senses are quickened by the air and exercise alone, and spirituous liquors only disgust. The hypocrisy and slavery of civilization are left behind. All hearts dilate as they look down from their dromedaries on the glorious desert. What traveller did it ever disappoint?"

Was Mahomet's dream of world-liberation strange? The recesses of the desert have ever been the Rock-Rimmons of the oppressed. In Africa and Arabia every tribe has its proud traditions of liberty. The fatalism of such a world does not quench self-assertion or suppress achievement, but is thrown with omnipotent force to their side. Even Alî's sentence finds its meaning, — "Despair is a freeman, hope is a slave." Christianity abjures fate, but its disciples might profitably study this creed of the desert in its startling combination with energy and faith; for Christianity has not taught man to escape the necessity that rules his life and death.

[1] Burckhardt found among the most numerous tribes only here and there a blacksmith and leather-mender. A wife can be divorced at will, but can flee to her father's house from the husband's tyranny, and be safe. The honor and defence of woman is the glory of Bedouin poetry and romance. The Arabs were the parents of chivalry.

Whence, then, but from the desert could come the fire that should burn up thrones and empires, and call the poor to the shelter of a King of kings? What contempt is bred here for the decrepitude of nations! Is not the Arab of Islam, with his whelming tide of conquest, and his swift ruin of the spoils of ages, and his instant reconstruction of the civilized world, explicable enough? Islam was the nomad claiming his original birthright in the religion of personal Will. Its conquests were but the triumph of an all-commanding instinct to master personal barriers, to move with unlimited freedom on the willing earth.

Is the religious passion that exalted these tendencies into conquering forces less natural? The desert is the prophet's cell and throne. Forth from its wastes march the self-chosen preparers of highways for their God. Moses brings its rocky sternness, Zoroaster its battle of good and evil, and John the Baptist its passionate thirst for waters; Jesus its absolutism, its self-concentration and self-assertion, its intolerance of the practical conditions of social work, its prophecy of their swift destruction, its haunting thought of the Eternal; and finally Mahomet, with not a few of these, its revelations, had, besides, the flash of its sworded sunbeams, and its compulsion to trust in the all-sufficiency of such means and forces as await the master's will. It is not here that idolatry shall sink the person in the thing, the Maker in his work, where every symbol burns with concentrated purpose. So long as these symbols abide, Theism shall not fail of apostles. Of the sun in the desert one has said: "He seemed to command me, and to say, 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me.' I was all alone before Him."[1] Another has called Jahveh "the genius of the desert, its eternal inhabitant."[2] Not more so, we may add, than Ormuzd,

[1] Kinglake. [2] Quinet.

than Allah, than the Creator and Father under every name, — than all forms of supreme providential care. It is a Hymn of the Ages that the English traveller Pringle has sung in his matchless description of a desert ride and rest: —

> "Afar in the desert I love to ride,
> With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side. . . .
> And here while the night-winds around me sigh,
> And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
> As I sit apart by the desert stone,
> Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
> 'A still small voice' comes through the wild
> (Like a father consoling his fretful child),
> Which banishes bitterness, wrath, and fear,
> Saying, Man is distant, but God is near."

Such were the geographical conditions which nurtured a special form of the religious ideal, dominant thus far in the foremost lines of civilized humanity, — that of monotheistic revelation. The sublime unconscious egoism of its masters, the fruit of solitary prayers and struggles, is essentially of the mountain, the waste, the cave, where the inward message could not be shared nor brought by institutions or rival seers. When they trod the crowded streets of Jerusalem, of Memphis, of Mecca, or Bokhara, it was not as fellow-students of laws which all could see for themselves, but as chosen teachers of what had been commanded in themselves alone. Regions like Palestine, Edom, Arabia, — deserts, or tracts encircled and set with desert spaces, marked out among the nations by a pure tribal individualism, — shaped these living types of self-assertion and revelation. Their God could not be social, nor his word a progressive reason in man. He must be a solitary indivisible Force, an authority not to be scrutinized, rivalled, or shared. The infinite play of harmonious laws in Nature and life, in which the divine substance of the world is now coming to be manifested to the free

student of world-uses and united powers, had no place there; that nobler meaning of Unity, for which this monarchical phase has been the preparation, is yet to appear. Only the absolutely unmodified and final personal Will — now a tender parent, now a terrible judge — can answer to the highest forms of religious need, summed up in an ultimate simplicity which forbids science, forecloses progress, and suppresses freedom. Its word is: "*I am* hath sent me unto you." "There is no God but One, and Mahomet is his prophet." "My kingdom is not of this world." The judgment day shall reveal it. On a lower plane, but with no greater finality, a Genghis announces, "One God, one Khan."[1]

Such influences account in no slight measure for Mahomet, because they shaped the race of which he was born. The genius of a race or of a civilization always determines that of its highest mind; and no examples of this law are more decisive than those which are supposed to be due to an inspiration superior to human conditions. In the thought and method of the highest masters there is a naïve element, an unconscious temperament, which penetrates all that is conditional and all that is universal. And for that wonderful force of natural selection which made Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries, through its typical man, the autocrat of the faith and life of nations, we must find the momentum in its population of free tribes, swayed by the impulse of individualism, inured to physical endeavors, exalted by an imaginative self-conscious temperament and an intense force of personal concentration. That Arab ideal of personal dignity and self-respect which formed the warrior and the God of Islam is conspicuous in the passion of these tribes for

[1] The reference here is not, of course, to the special legislation of these masters of revealed religion, which, as we have seen in Mahomet, has often established freer institutions than it found, but to the *idea* of *God* as unchangeable and past question or judgment of men.

biography and genealogy. The whole poetic literature of pre-Islamic Arabia for half a century before Mahomet is of the lyrical, or distinctively individual, kind. Even its narrative, legendary, and didactic portions are inspired by the same qualities of direct intuition and free emotion. The prolific energy of this national poetry cannot be conceived without study of the immense labors of Hammer-Purgstall in collecting, classifying, and translating its products; and the strongest impression made by this survey is of the multitudinous variations that may be played on a few personal instincts and relations. The Hamâsa of Abû Temmâm contains nearly a thousand poems, which pour out, with startling spontaneity and frankness, the jealousies, rivalries, hospitalities, ambitions, the loves and hates, the magnanimities and revenges, the hopeless griefs of bereavement, the stoical pride in endurance, and the passionate yearnings for the lost, whereof the old Bedouin life was made up.[1] Their changes are rung on themes of war and rapine, of tribal and ancestral pride, of haughty self-assertion and self-praise, on tender tributes to worth, on extremes of personal eulogy and satire, on the immortality of heroic deeds, on the deep sense of the irremediable, on the necessity of trust in life and death, or the pessimism of brooding grief. More touching loyalty to natural affection and domestic ties, more freedom from all pretence to solve their insoluble problems, more frank acceptance of the realities of destiny, can nowhere be found. An intensely sensuous susceptibility, a keen instinct for actuality,

[1] Immense labor has been expended by the Mahometans in collecting and criticising these poems of the "Age of Ignorance." The first studies were immediately after Mahomet, and were purely philological; but in less than a century poetic merit was the object of research; the traditions of the tribes, the memories of bards and reciters, were explored in every quarter. (Muir: *Royal Asiatic Society*, xi. pt. 1, 447a–449). Forgeries and corrupt readings are of course frequent in the innumerable verses that have thus accumulated. The lowest calculation of these pre-Islamic poets puts their number at one hundred and fifty; but there is no historical ground for these inquiries beyond the century before Mahomet. Wüttke (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, ix. 144, 157). Hammer, i. 384.

easily runs into scepticism about a future life; and old age is, next to death, the saddest of prospects, — "the dregs of life's full goblet." [1] No formula of immortality checks the full flow of the bereaved sympathies. "Very near are the dead to the living, yet how remote and dubious their companionship!" [2] Koss lingers by the graves of his brothers, and will not leave them by day or night. "How long, dear ones, have you slept? Know you not I am alone here, with no friends but you. Death watches you so closely; it draws my body to you in the grave. If a man could offer his life for another's, how gladly would I be your ransom! Lo, I have seen the entrance to death, but not its exit." [3]

In the midst of strife, blessed are the peace-makers even here; the noble men who broke up a tribe-feud of forty years receive all the honor a Christian poet could accord for their self-sacrifice and courage; and their reward is contrasted with the sure ignominy and misery of the self-convicted foe of God and man.[4] The old Arab ideal required every man to be "brave, generous, and a poet;" a self-dependent, self-asserting personality is the soul of this prolific muse, even of her didactic proverbs.[5]

"'Tis for thee, what thou dost honor within thyself to find."
"Life's goods are but a loan; fools only fancy them their own."
"The past is fled, and what we strive for gone; only the moment's ours." [6]

"One man is better than a thousand oft." "And he whose worth is known goes not to ground." "Delay and weakness are destruction." "He who can make the most of a part, is sure of success." "Strife is the mother of despair." "Honor thy horse, and overload not thy camel." "Fear God, and love thy kin." "He is generous who succors them that need." "Of such as awaken neither fear nor

[1] Hamâsa of Abû Temmâm, 447[a] (49).
[2] Hamâsa, 289. See also Kremer: *Gesch. d. Herrsch. Ideen d. Islams*, pp. 166–168.
[3] Sprenger, i. 104.
[4] *Soheîr Ben Ebî Solma's Mo'allakât.*
[5] Mohl: *Vingt-sept ans des Études Orient.*, ii. 54.
[6] Hamâsa, 447[a] (13).

hope, make not your friends." "Be brief, for many words are wont to be folly." "Let not a stranger be misused; for many a man is worth a thousand other men." "The misfortune in plans is desire."[1]

Here is none of the paraphrase and far-sought metaphor that bedeck the artificial emotion of Persian poetry. What this spontaneous singer utters is his bold confession, his fiery impulse, his faith or his despair. The ethics of the desert rest on solemn resistless laws. The sentences of Lokmân, the father of Arab gnomic wisdom, to whom Mahomet devotes a Sura of his Koran, are charged with this instinctive worship of the moral order.

"Of old we bestowed wisdom upon Lokmân, and taught him to say: 'Be thankful to God, join not other gods to God, this is the great impiety. O my son, God will bring everything to light, though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and hid in a rock, for God knoweth all. O my son, observe prayer and enjoin right, and forbid wrong; be patient under whatsoever shall betide thee. Walk not loftily on the earth, for God loveth not the arrogant.'"[2]

Mahomet's quotations are doubtful; but it is certain that the great semi-mythic form of Lokmân rises on us in the gray Arab antiquity as the natural precursor of the Prophet, who found in this recognized type of the race to which he belonged the substance of his own message to the world. Contemporary of David, a second Noah, saved from the doom of a wicked race, teacher of the wisdom of animals, a patriarch twenty generations old, king of the primeval Sabean tribes, builder of the gigantic dike of Ma'rib, Job's nephew, judge of the Jews; moreover by birth, like Antar the hero of Arab romance, a black slave,—Lokmân has been a centre of pre-Islamic mythology for all later romance.[3] Whether

[1] Hammer-Purgstall: *Literatur gesch. d. Araber*, i. 332 (Amrû); and i. 39, 40 (Ektem Ben Ssaîfi).

[2] Sura xxxi. 10–18.

[3] Sprenger: *Das Leben und Lehre des Mohammad:* i. 95. Busch: *Urgeschichte d. Orients*, iii. 28, 242. Wüttke (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, ix 142).

the fables ascribed to him are of native or Greek origin is still debated among scholars; but their extreme simplicity, compact sense and humor, as well as the absence of all associations of an advanced state of society, point naturally to the traditional lore of the nomadic tribes of ancient Arabia.[1] They represent the practical side of life rather than the ideal, but hold fast the same centre in individual responsibility; their precepts are of piety, modesty, prudence, benevolence, and honor. Saadî says that Lokmân learned wisdom from the blind, who go nowhere till they know the place. Mahomet might have learned of him the instincts of equality and personal force. "Whoever has not borne the injustice of the rich, knows not how to sympathize with the poor." Nor do the legends fail to find the natural man of the senses in him, gladly holding him to the conditions of human weaknesses and passions.

The poets of that Age of Ignorance at least lived in that direct contact with the objects of thought which makes of perception pure intuition and inspiration. Their songs are bursts of self-abandonment. Whatever the exciting touch, the imagination is ready to kindle into flames that consume the world. The old Arabic has no future tense; memories, traditions, hopes, are melted into the moment's mood. This tactile feeling is too sensuous for dogma, too keenly susceptible for theories or analyses of things. A battle with circumstances opens life: a tragic storm of feeling, even an outburst of sensual excess, is likely to end it. Of this intensity of instinct, especially of self-will, the natural outcome is apparent in vices of temper and social conduct; but there is no orgiastic worship of sensuality, as in the Phrygian rites that had infested the Greek and Christian worlds.[2]

[1] *Fables de Lokmân*, translated by Léon et Henri Helot, 1857. Also Sprenger, i 95-101. Busch, iii. 23.

[2] See Tharafa's *Mo'allakât* poem. Hammer-Purgstall: i. 305.

The greatest of these libertines of picture and song was Imrîol-Kaîs. In his youth he sings his love to a maiden, at hazard of his life; and is saved from his own father's rage by the devotion of a slave, who, when ordered to put out his eyes, carries the infuriated sheikh a pair of roe's eyes instead of his son's. The old man relents from his barbarous purpose, but never from his hatred of the muse. Yet when he is murdered, the son, with instant change of heart, forsaking wine and women, swears to avenge him on a whole tribe; and, being defeated, escapes to the court of Justinian, whence he is compelled by a new love-adventure to flee, and dies at last, Hercules-like, of a poisoned tunic sent by imperial hands.[1] His genius is far more imaginative and fine than that of any of his fellows. Yet though he has seen the great centres of Chaldean and Persian life, and knows the sea as well as the desert and the town, he none the less remains the true Arab, who lives in the joy of the moment, for the fair maidens like gazelles, and knows not how to reflect, so urged is he by stress of life and desire. He can pause to describe the freshet's rush or the pangs of love; but his pride is the free lance and victory, and his scorn is for mere subsistence.[2]

What stirs these knightly lays is the tragic situation, the embroilment beyond relief, the command to heroic sacrifice for friendship and love.[3] Twelve songs of praise immortalize as many women, all famous in their day.[4] Not less ideal is the wild raid, fit school for these spoilers of nations. The desert Ishmael glories in rhyming his swoop on his neighbor's camel-herd and the feud that came of it, and even the summer hunt for ostrich-eggs in the sands on his swift flight through the naked land to

[1] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 292. Wüttke (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, ix. 149).
[2] Kremer: *Culturgesch. d. Araber*, i. 297.
[3] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 29, 67, 68, 70.
[4] Ibid., i.

his beloved. He is a lord so free of his desert home that it is but nature to go singing on his way.[1]

> "There howls the wolf: well know we one another;
> The voice of man sounds like the bird's wild lay.
> And night rolls o'er my head to point my work and way;
> At sunset I my vows renew."[2]

He stops his steed when at full speed, at the summons of a thought, to write his Kassîdet of love, his "stirrup song;" his eye and ear quicker than the fine senses of the Greek, — the heavens and earth and all that live and move therein their larger nerves. This eye, ear, hand of the desert must be his own instant and sufficient providence, king of the moment by wit and will. No oath but his word; no house but his tent; no fortress but his sword; no law but the traditions of masters like himself.[3] These old songs of desert raids, in the so-called Age of Ignorance, could not be dispensed with in the later days of the great Mussulman conquests, and the glories of the Caliphate; they were sung before combat in the Omeyyad camps.[4]

> "I am he who swerves not from his plan; unmoved, whate'er befall;
> Who plunges 'neath the flood of death and grasps the prize he claims;
> Who takes no counsel but his own mind's law, and asks no help but his good sword."[5]
> "He who drives not the foe from his cisterns will see them destroyed.
> He who avoids injury to others shall not escape harm even so."[6]
> "To the words of other men 't is common to say *nay*, when one will;
> But no man says *nay* to us when we give sentence."
> "Not in all our line is there one of blunted heart, nor one who is a niggard."[7]

[1] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 278.
[2] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 258. See also Baur: *Der arab. Held. u. Dichter, Ta'abbata Sarran* (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, x. 74–109).
[3] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 266, 293, 321. 335, 378, etc.
[4] Kremer: *Culturgesch. unter d. Chalifen*, ii. 356.
[5] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 263. *Saad Ben Naschib.*
[6] Wright: *Christianity in Arabia*, p. 66.
[7] Poole's Preface to *Extracts from the Koran*, p. xv.

"The world is ours," sings Amrû, "and all that is on the face of it; and none can resist our attack. When a tyrant oppresses a people, we scorn to submit to his will. We fill the earth with our tents, till it becomes too narrow to hold them, and cover the sea with our ships." This gaze over the rim of the desert after a mission to right the world, hints of social aspirations beyond the impermanence and isolation of the nomadic life, everywhere writ on its vestiges of ruined towns and tribes. Ancestral and tribal ties were the Arab's nearest approach to civil or political relations; his patriotism, his immortality, meant these. "Love thy tribe; it is more close to thee than the tie of man and wife."[1] There were shrines where the tribes repaired every year to hold a pious truce; where every precaution was taken to avoid collisions, even to the extent of wearing masks and veils; where, also, it is probable, the imagination was kindled by fresh superstitions to confirm or heighten the old terrors of solitude. Only so could they counteract that all-pervading sense of transiency which, as in the beautiful Mo'allakât verses of Lebîd, everywhere breaks forth in minor key, through all their fortitude, freedom, and zest for sensual and warlike enjoyments.[2] A peculiar melancholy showed itself in their temperament as soon as it was brought in contact with the luxury and frivolity of Oriental manners. The desert fates were stern; and even the humanities awakened by these tribal gatherings do not seem to have restrained certain cruel customs arising from poverty and isolation, against which the Prophet was obliged to raise his voice. All the more intensely must have burned the longing and need for social sympathies; or whence that thirst for heroic dealing before which our ethical refinements pale? Hence the knighthood, —

[1] Dozy: *Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 101.
[2] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 319.

"Whose word is enough to shield the unsheltered when peril comes, in strife and storm.
Yea, noble are they; not from them shall the vengeful gain the blood of his foe;
Nor shall even he who has wronged them be left without help."
"For the night wanderer one light is never quenched;
Nor has ever a guest reproached us where men meet together." [1]

To these proud, free instincts political disciplines were intolerable. From their own necessities they carved their civilization. Retaliation became a restraining law; the protection of chiefs a court of justice, a refuge for the wronged; chivalrous treatment of women a domestic and social jurisprudence. Honor to the best and most capable had drawn these fiery units as by magnetism to lines of aristocratic tradition. Yet they had no genius for subordination, no instinct of permanent unity beyond the tribe itself. Mahomet united them but for a moment, and through wonderful conjuncture of times and persons. On his death they were all in arms, and only restrained from disintegration by the genius of Abû Bekr and Omar, and the prospect of foreign raids. Nevertheless, the depression of the desert and their unsatisfied social yearnings pushed them to larger spheres of sympathy and power. Mahomet's call to religious unity of purpose was followed up by the more peremptory summons to boundless citizenship and mastery, — to a national organization suited to grasp an imperial world. The southern tribes, as well as those in the extreme north, had reached something more nearly approaching nationality than those of the intermediate deserts; their literature centres in the kings of Himyar, Saba, and Hira, and on wars and trophies almost Assyrian in type if not in scale.[2] To them the crusade

[1] Translated from Arabic by C. T. Lyall, quoted in Poole's *Extracts from the Koran*. Preface on "The Arabs before Mohammed," pp. xv, xix.

[2] For a minute account of the Arabian tribes and their relations in Mahomet's time, see Blau (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxiii. 569).

now opening must have offered immeasurable hopes. In this Arab exodus, spontaneity, force of circumstances, and natural reaction are so united that the resultant might well have been a tidal-wave in history. The sublime swearing of the Koran seems but the concentrated thunder of the old Bedouin vows of individual passion, love and revenge, pride and grief, and of absolute faith in personal destiny and heroic *morale*. The summons it authenticated was indeed new; but it was the more inspiring in that its objects were close at hand, — the overthrow of time-worn and despised idolatries, and the rally of equal children of the one God, Father of the fathers and Sheikh of sheikhs, to instant judgment of a disobedient world.

This preparation of the Arabs for war on idolatry may be distinctly discerned in the popular, non-religious poetry of the Hamâsa. The old rites, however tenaciously adhered to by their aristocratic guardians, had not only lost, as we have seen, their hold on the imagination of this naturally rationalistic race, but had even become objects of highly secular ridicule.[1] It cannot be entirely explained by the liberties taken with these national songs by later collectors, that they contain scarce an allusion to the old planetary Sabean gods worshipped in animal or vegetable forms; to the cult of Venus and of the sun, long prevalent in Arabia; to the idols of the Kaaba; to the male and female tribal deities, or to the demonology introduced by neighboring religions. There seems to have been a prescience even of higher reliance. When religious fear or trust takes possession of the poet, its object is some universal power, such as Fate or Providence, or the unity of God.[2]

Mahomet declared war against the poets as misleaders of the people, partly because they criticised his claims to

[1] Dozy: *Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 12.

[2] For the nature of these cults, see Osiander (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, vii. 464–503).

a higher inspiration than their own, and partly upon personal grounds. He did not enjoy the taunts of practical people, who asked, "Shall we leave our gods for a crazy poet?" It was not pleasant to be classed in a category so large that camels and lizards were popularly described as members of it. Yet he said of Lebîd's line, "Is not all besides God nought?" that it was the greatest of verses; and glorified Sâid Ben Newfil for singing, —

"I serve not Osa and her goddess child,
I turn me not to Thasm's idol shrine,
I serve not thousand lords, but One alone;"[1]

and found Waraka inspired, when, hearing Belâl, under torture for denying the gods of his tribe, cry out, "One, One, One!" he exclaimed, "By Allah, you tribe of Belâl, though you slay him, you shall not have your will;" and then sang an ode in praise of God.[2]

In fact Mahomet, though repudiating the name of poet and rejecting regular metre in his Suras, was himself incomparably the greatest of Arab poets, and has the same title to the name as Amos or Isaiah.[3] Perhaps, like some great masters of the art, — like Goethe, partly from intense earnestness or realism, — he regarded poetry as less natural than prose. He knew well what the singers had done for him in anticipating his grandest revelations. Tradition credits him even with composing odes, and storing his memory with those of other men. The Sunna says "he bade that children should be taught poetry, which opened the mind, made courage hereditary, and bore the fruit of wisdom." Illiterate as he called himself, he had no contempt for letters. He set the captives at Badr to ransom themselves by teaching writing to his ignorant converts.[4] If he set his face against the great literary

[1] Hammer-Purgstall: i. 56.
[2] Hammer, i. 56.
[3] See his beautiful parables, x. 25; ii. 266; poem of the conversion of Abraham, vi. 74. Sura of the Desert Horses. c.
[4] Hammer, i. 396.

reunions of Okadh, where "a magical language was built ready to his skilful hand," and where the friendly rivalry of tribal bards must have nourished the noblest aspirations, it was doubtless because the old institution refused to become merged in his own universal aims and beliefs. It has been said that "in destroying it, he put an end to the Arab nation and created his own new nation of Muslims, who cannot sit in the places of the old Arabs."[1] The change transformed a race of semi-nomads into masters of a world faith and law, — an unparalleled change, reaching on with widening power for a thousand years. Mahomet knew his instruments. He recognized his countrymen's claims as superior to those of Jew or Christian. He put every waiting capacity to ideal use. He gave his nation's genius moral energy and self-mastering obedience to a purpose. Carlyle has put the substance of this mystery into words that will never be supplanted: —

> "Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, as soon as it believes. These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century, — is it not as if a spark had fallen, *one* spark, on a world that seemed black unnoticeable sand! But lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada. I said the Great Man was always like lightning out of heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame."

So rooted in his age and country, so natural as the culmination of ages of will-worship, what remains for Mahomet as an original personal force? As the focus of tendencies, the great man becomes their new and all-commanding organ. He is new and creative; not indeed as outside of the line of Nature, but as fulfilling the process of existing causes, which demand concentration in personal insight and will. Genius is not historical merely; it is as profound a mystery in the world of mind as the new and

[1] Poole: Preface to *Selections from the Koran*, p. xxvi.

higher element that springs into visibility from the collision of flint and steel. The advent of unexpected energy in the transformation of lower conditions is the law of progress: it is the constant sign of cosmical forces in every step of evolution, — in other words, of the immanence of the Infinite in the finite. When we have summed up all the conditions for the result which our science can reach, there remains always this untraceable element of conditions past our knowing. The names we give it do not alter its nature; inspiration, revelation, miracle, latent forces, mystery of growth, are terms, more or less blind, to cover these cosmical conditions, equally real in the growth of an acorn into an oak, and in that of an age or a civilization into a religion. Genius and personal mastership are powers that differ from the rest only as focal expressions of more subtile, vast, and even universal conditions. This is the ground of their special sanity, their redeeming, all-glorifying power. Of a Shakspeare, a Goethe, a Plato, there is no explanation but the universe of mind. So it is with the masters of religion, of philosophy, of character. They move the world, because they are the accord, the rhythm, the unity of the world. Each in his way is unprecedented, not to be divined nor predicted, for Nature never repeats herself. His conscious conditions are determinable only in proportion to the degree in which his spirit is shared: the unconscious conditions lie veiled in the infinite complexities of being and growth. But not one of these untraceable personal forces can fail of having natural relations to such simpler ones as are discernible by the student of historical laws. So far we may go, and no farther; and this is adequate for all needful purposes. To seek an ultimate analysis of causes and conditions is here as futile as to drain Thor's goblet filled from the sea. There is no formula for making genius. The scientific understanding may construct a manikin, but never a hero or a seer.

Time slowly reveals where each man's personal force lay, and separates what he did from what he was supposed to do. But the names and lives to which the great historic religions are traced back have been so enormously idealized, and are involved in such obscurity, both of facts and of records, that the difficulties are in most instances insuperable.

These difficulties need not disturb us in the case of Mahomet. However idealized after his death, his life is a matter of verifiable record. His book and his sword were his own. He is a palpable power, from the moment of his Hegira, in Arabia and among the nations. Numbers of the great men of Islam were his personal companions, and the first four caliphs may be said to have passed from his death-bed to reconstruct empires from the issues of his heart and brain. Of all religious founders, this man alone shaped his own work to imperial success, and substantially, even within his own lifetime, through the wonderful personal instruments which he won to his side from out the little Arab world.[1] There stand his merits and faults in the full blaze of the Arabian sun, without attempt on his part at concealment. He is an Arab of the Arabs, and naïvely proud of his dependence. "I am the truest of Arabs: my descent is from the Koreish, my tongue is of the Benî Saad."[2] He was a nomad in genius and in taste. Bokhârî tells us that he said "a prophet must first be a long while a shepherd," and that agriculture made men vain and impudent. Seeing a ploughshare, he said, "When these things enter a people's house they become low-minded."[3] There he stands before an unlettered race, whose native genius for poetry despised all written records, to cry: "Bountiful is God, who has taught man the use of

[1] Ibn Icaba gives biographies of eight thousand persons who knew him. Sprenger: Introduction, xi.

[2] Kitab al Wâkidî's Hishâm.

[3] Mussulman tradition, quoted by Goldziher: *Mythology among the Hebrews*, p. 81.

the pen;" and therewith to give forth, written on blade-bones, bits of parchment, palm-leaves, and on the tablets of the heart of hearers, in impure Arabic and without constructive method, out of the emergencies of inward and outward struggles, the Book (*Kur'ân*, somewhat to be read) which should be the fountain of faith, letters, and institutions to hundreds of millions of men for fifty generations. Here was no refinement of linguistic or logical art, no elaborate rhyme, no far-fetched metaphor, but a divine motion, conscious of supreme command, riding forth on his confused, stammering tongue; sweeping an agonized, semi-delirious brain into contradictions, retractions, blind devices, confused dilemmas, strange dealings with moral soundness and religious fear, — all of which have been too critically judged by outside observation. It seems to have been in sheer sense of failure to bear the burden of his word that he called the right use of language the perfection of success; and he admitted his inability to understand his revelations in their coming, so that he must needs work them over after the angelic utterance, before they could come to shape for mankind. Why should we cavil at the marks of such self-criticism in the Koran, — the conscious revisals of a message which his best rendering could only stain and mar? Vain attempt, at best, to translate the open talk of a man with the God of his ideal conviction, imagined as an objective real presence, and hide no word, nor tone, nor hint of its meaning whether to his own honor or rebuke! Might it not well end in a book, "written," as Carlyle says, perhaps not too strongly, "as badly as almost any book ever was, so that nothing but a sense of duty could carry a European through it, — an incoherent bundle of experiences, no more capable of certain arrangement than the ripple-marks on a beach after heavy storms"? Yet in all this the marvellous Arabic tongue went through a transformation that consigned

all Mo'allakâts, Kassîdets, or other literary treasures to comparative oblivion, — no continuation of their styles even, but a new creation. What triumphant mastery so to transform a nation's jealously guarded ideal, mingling native with foreign words! For language was the Arab's religion more than all the gods of the Kaaba; yet the Koran, the Koran only, is henceforth the norm of books to this book-adoring Arab, the veritable Arabic speech of Allah, the tracing of the infinite pen!

"See you not that I, an ignorant prophet, could never have done this thing, — lifted your organ for the love-songs of Imrîol-Kais, or the Hanîfite Rolls of Abraham, into a holy tongue for all mankind? Ask you greater miracle than this, O unbelieving people, than to have your profane Arabic turned into a message of universal mercy, a thunderbolt against tyranny, a trumpet to call the world to singleness of heart and faith? Do they bid thee change it? Say, it is not for me to change it by my own will. Verily, I fear if I rebel, the punishment of the great day."

Yet this supernaturalist, cowering under the terrors of his own awful trust, has been detected by the modern critic in altering, transposing, reconstructing, to suit new conjunctures, till the whole is past the critic's analytic and collocating skill. Hence the ready charge of hypocrisy, the cool dealing of an impostor with his own fraud. Why not find rather an over-anxious care to get the momentous message rightly put by the half-seeing human faculties, whose light on its meaning can only be made clear by the process of events?

Successful he was at all events, blind and confused as the message lay before his companions at his unlooked-for death, when he who alone could say what was in it, was no longer with them. Only a year elapsed before his scribe Zeyd must gather up its fragments, so that it could be committed *verbatim* by heart. Then, eighteen years afterwards, when his first companions were all dying in battle, and an authentic version must be hastened up, the same

hand is set to compiling an even more careful text. Caliph Othmân, the third of the line, fixes this as the final appeal of Islam, now centred, as a positive faith is bound to be, in a Book of books, and all other versions are burned throughout the empire (650 A.D.). No arrangement seemed then feasible but to put the longest Suras first, where the sharp historical criticism of to-day says they do not belong. Even now it lies in its well-nigh structureless plasma of emotion, beat up from abysses of woe, lifted on gusts of passionate will, paling with confession, glowing with fierce rebuke, — strange, unconscious chaos of objective truth with subjective error. If it is not poetry, — and it is hard to say whether it be or not, — it is more than poetry. It is not history, nor biography. It is not anthology, like the Sermon on the Mount; nor metaphysical dialectics, like the Buddhist Sûtras; nor sublime homiletics, like Plato's conferences of the wise and foolish teachers. It is a prophet's cry, Semitic to the core; yet of a meaning so universal and so timely that all the voices of the age take it up, willing or unwilling, and it echoes over palaces and deserts, over cities and empires, first kindling its chosen hearts to world-conquest, then gathering itself up into a reconstructive force that all the creative light of Greece and Asia might penetrate the heavy gloom of Christian Europe, when Christianity was but the Queen of Night.[1] In the eleventh century, when the Christian Church was the mortal foe of science and of Nature, five thousand two hundred and eighteen teachers of the schools of the Koran were commending these studies to the civilized world. Sâduk, when asked why the Koran appeared the newer the more it was read, answered, "It was not sent for one age or time, but for all mankind to the end of the world."[2] Its monotheism was the climax of exclusive

[1] See St. Hilaire's testimony. Jonguière: *Hist. del'Empire Ottoman*, p. 86.
[2] Wüttke (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, ix. 137).

religion; yet so all-embracing was its objective ideal that it created the largest unities in the sphere of religious belief. "The leaves of God's book," said its Sufis, "are the religious persuasions."

Much of a similar nature might be said of the powers of other Scriptures. The difference is, that of this book Mahomet was himself the indubitable maker. There is no pretence that any apostle conceived, or gathered, or fathered it upon his master. No lapse of a period like that which separates most of the New Testament writings from the days of Jesus, parted it from the living subject; no deposit was ever made in it of Jewish or Arabic stores by later schools. Even the many elaborations which the merciless scalpel of the critic now brings to view, are unquestionably of Mahomet's own devising. Crowded with national traditions, and steeped in foreign lore and garbled legend out of every faith, the Prophet's ideal purpose flames through the whole, fusing everything over and over again to satisfy the needs of the hour. I hold it to be as absolutely sincere as any human book composed under the pressure of imagined Divine special direction has ever been or can be; its faults reveal best the inherent falsity of the conception itself, but it is none the less the irrepressible cry of a possessed enthusiast and apostle of his times. The miracle of the book, of the rhymed prose that silenced the pride of ancestral metres, the mark on ages and tribes that never grows dim, is the son of Abdallah himself.

Probably we may say that there is nothing like this record in the whole history of authenticated personal achievement. Results even more amazing are ascribed by Christian faith to an historic personage, but under circumstances that forbid our knowing what he really was and did. In the one case, everything not purely ideal has been smoothed away from the adored image of an incar-

nate God, age after age; in the other, there stand out, honestly admitted, all the errors, irrationalities, and delusive dreams that belong to the pretension of supernatural claims and private revelation.

It seems incomprehensible that far down into the present century, through all ages of Christian development, this name has been synonymous with Satan, and its swarming confessors abhorred as infernal hosts. So much can the rivalries of creeds and churches effect in foreclosing even the desire of justice. With Christendom, the relentless charge of infidelity and imposture has rested on the assumption that every claim to personal inspiration, save that of Jesus, must have been a conscious lie. He and none other could by any possibility be honest and sane in claiming to be the Son of God and "Judge of quick and dead." The inconsistency proves that reason repudiates the claim itself. Still more glaring is the theological malice of the highest minds, persevered in down to the moment when Arab historians like Al Hishâm, Abûlfeda, and others forced open the eyes of scholars in the present age; and the dense ignorance of Christendom concerning Mahomet and his work for civilization was scattered by resultant studies of the Book and the Faith.

It was natural, since the fine arts were the pupils of the Church, that, while Michael Angelo painted the Christ as awarding eternal life and death at the last judgment, another great painter — Orcagna — should represent Mahomet as torn in pieces by devils, and that Dante should find him cloven in twain and displaying his rent bosom in hell for having torn the Church by schism.[1] Yet we cannot conceal the fact that not a century before this terrible anathema the great Arabic work of Sharastânî had shown how much broader a feeling of the sympathy of religions than existed in Christendom, had sprung up in the soil of the

[1] *Inferno*, xxviii.

Koran.[1] Protestantism, worshipping its own Bible, had all the less tolerance for a rival Bible, and from the outset pronounced its author the chief of liars. It would serve little purpose to enumerate the phases of this wild and worthless abuse. So fully identified were the titles "impostor" and "infidel" with this one name, that they became catchwords for historians of all grades, from Prideaux to Hallam.[2] Even Goethe, in his tragedy of "Mahomet," makes him a ruthless, unprincipled assassin, without a sign of faith in his own creed. To this very day that mediæval exegesis frequently reappears, and the little horn of Daniel's vision still reminds Christendom of the Antichrist of Mecca, and aggravates political hatred towards his infidel lair upon the Bosphorus. The first word of justice to the accursed Paynim was spoken by that earliest and kindliest of English travellers, Sir John Mandeville, — a clear bugle-note in the night of superstition and hate. Four centuries passed before another noble tribute was paid to the worth of Islam, when Lessing struck the key of modern religious liberty in his "Nathan the Wise." How it startled English decorum when Carlyle dared to lift Mahomet among the heroes of history, in letters of fiery indignation! Then came scholars like Sprenger and Kremer,[3] Nöldeke, Dozy, Geiger and Rodwell, Sale and Lane, with clearest proof that here was a force too vast and too concentrated to be treated with contempt, and that the Prophet and his message were in the natural order of historic movement. The sum of all evidences, now abundantly available, will convince us that this exalted person was in fact substantially real and sincere,

[1] *The History of Religious Sects.*

[2] See Renan: *Etudes d'Histoire Religieuse*, p. 223.

[3] Kremer, especially (*Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam* and *Culturgesch. unter d. Chalifen*), has done full justice both to Mahomet and his religion. The same cannot be said of Sprenger's learned and minute biography, which refuses him every quality of greatness and even of common morality, finds no element of genuineness in him save his fanaticism, — a pathological condition merely, — and no sign of original genius or noble motive. Sprenger is not a generous critic, nor is he capable of spiritual insight; but he shows even to excess the dependence of Mahomet on his times. (See, especially, *Das Leben*, etc., i. 39-49.)

wonderfully self-sustained and self-directed towards ideal ends, and rooted, not in his age and its demands only, but in the truth of things and the soul of truth.

Mahomet had at once the temperament of genius and the tendency to melancholia, noticeable even at the present day in the Arab race. Naturally modest, timid, irresolute even, extremely sensitive to pleasure and pain, he was easily carried beyond self-control by impressions from the moral and spiritual imagination, to which he ascribed objective reality. How far these phenomena were caused by the morbid excitability of his physical system, subject to febrile and cephalic spasms from what has been defined as "muscular hysteria," and how far the disease itself was a result of mental convulsions, it is not easy to determine. His birth fell at a period of intense affliction in the life of his mother; but it is little less than atrocious to ascribe his whole history to that circumstance.[1] Partly from disease, and partly from moral and religious passion, that projection of inward into outward sense, which has had more or less to do with the experience of men of genius like Luther, Swedenborg, Goethe, and others, rose into a permanent state of exaltation by supposed possession, demonic or divine, and at last into absolute self-surrender to the inspirations of the Supreme Will through the visits of its angelic messenger. Yet we must not ascribe too much of this conviction to special disease, since it was the natural product of belief in anthropomorphic deity, and as true of Moses and Jesus as of Mahomet. Down to modern

[1] Robertson Smith. Sir W. Muir goes to the opposite extreme, in denying this dependence, but charges him with deliberately abandoning his inspiration to expediency; evidently dissatisfied that he "did not become, as he might have done, a St. Mahomet, or founder of Christian churches in Arabia by martyrdom."

E. A. Freeman's *History and Conquests of the Saracens* passes a judgment for the most part liberal and just, though not without some superficial criticism (pp. 52, 53, 57). Oscar Reschel (*Races of Men*, 302) coolly calls him "a crafty impostor." As fair an account of the whole subject as can be found is the work of R. Bosworth Smith, in entire contrast with which is the one-sided little treatise on Islam published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, in their *non-Christian Systems*.

times every one believed in the possibility of inspiration, and in the direct movement of the Divine Will upon man by vision or by voice. How easily it adapted itself to the ordinary mental processes of its subject is seen by the remarkable degree to which this medium of the Infinite remained Mahomet, son of Abdallah, still, — no mere dreamer, but prudent, skilful, and self-controlled in the details of his appointed work. He was of noble form, of genial, tender manners, humane and sympathetic, and of an integrity that had won him the title of El Amîn,—the Upright.[1] The tales of his recognizing with tears of gratitude, in a captive brought to him after battle, the old nurse who had tended him in his childhood among the Benî-Saad; of the courage with which he faced the rage of Omar; and the firmness of his religious loyalty, which would not yield to the prayers or rebukes of his only protector among the leaders of his tribe, — are sustained by the general tenor of his conduct. He had belonged to a society of chivalrous men, formed for the protection of foreign traders against ill treatment in Mecca. According to tradition, the descendant through five generations from the founder of the glories of the Koreish, the real father of Mecca itself, he was overarched by the immemorial majesty of Abraham and his temple, with its holy stone coeval with creation. His divine commission is foreshadowed by events in the lives of his immediate ancestors. His father, thrice chosen by lot as a sacrifice, is thrice saved by substitution of animal victims on a great scale. His grandfather is born with white hair (innate wisdom), digs out the well Zemzem, and finds old buried treasures of sacred things. This messianic prestige is held of no account by Sprenger, who places him in a decayed branch of the Koreish, confined to the right of supplying pilgrims with water.[2]

[1] Dozy: *L'Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 21. Also *Selections*, etc.. Preface, pp. 28, 29.
[2] Sprenger: *Das Leben*, etc., i. 141.

The serious introversion that determines his destiny is made conceivable by his having been left an orphan in infancy, bereaved of his grandfather's care in boyhood, and set to the lonely and despised work of tending goats. However it may be, he walks modestly and industriously among men till his hour comes, a trusted and honored merchant, whose chief employer is proud to become his wife. Slowly the heavens and earth fill with predestined vision and command. Everything in him — powers and defects, will and temperament, honor and fear — works together to intensify his destiny. Even the cataleptic trances serve to convince his nearest companions of a divine afflatus. In his youth a devout believer in the popular polytheism,[1] slow to fix his faith on the absolute unity of God, and overwhelmed by the burden of inspiration which he could not resist, the solitary dreamer is convulsed by spiritual throes, in which familiar superstition and terrible self-disparagement by turns torment him, till he is driven to the brink of self-destruction, and saved only by the gracious whispers of his divine guest. He hurries back from the desert, trembling like a child, to the bosom of his Khadîja, praying only to be covered, whether from the overwhelming presence or from the night-chills of his agony — who can tell?

For two years imprisoned or shut out from social sympathy, his inward struggles become the more impassioned and desperate. But the angel has bidden him be patient, and in due time comes the self-surrender and the consolation, and at last the irresistible outflaming of his ideal into that image of omnipotent absolutism to which the worship of personal Will has in all ages steadily led its believers. Yet he shows neither the rage of the Christian Montanist nor the conceit of a Neoplatonic theurgist. Year after year he follows the command to convert and

[1] *Koran*, xciii. 7; lxiv. 5.

save mankind, with but one loyal woman to encourage him. He counts but thirty followers as the reward of three years of life-and-death struggle, not with the proud traditions of his native city alone, and the Koreish, their representatives, but with the common-sense of a sceptical people, who had known him from childhood, and who now verily believed him to be a crazy poet, and mocked him with questions about the latest news from heaven. It was a sharp test of his sincerity to be rejected by the wisest and best people, and ridiculed by the popular good sense. Yet he persevered, unmoved. Even the kind remonstrances of Abû Tâlib, his only relative and protector among the great men, were put aside, though with tears. "If Allah should put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, to abandon his great work before I have accomplished it or to perish in the attempt, I would *not* abandon it." The brave old Arab was moved: "Say what you will, I will not forsake you."[1] Tabarî tells us that the very stones cried out to hail him as the prophet of God. Called on to prove his mission by miracles, he dares to rest everything on the power of his conviction and the efficacy of his word. Once[2] his great central truth pales a moment before the temptation to a compromise for the benefit of his cause, so that he permits himself to recognize some good in the popular worship, though by no means to admit the divinity of the false gods; and the readiness of the people, on so slight a concession, to fall on their knees before Allah, proves how easily he could have had their applause for the seeking. But the sin of policy will not let him rest till he has renounced it, with all its rewards, even before they have been enjoyed. No tampering with truth![3] Even when a friend who had dared defend him, though unconverted, asks the crucial question what has become of

[1] Dozy: *L'Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 45.
[2] Sprenger, of course, makes the most of it.
[3] Dozy: *L'Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 50.

his son, dying outside of the true faith, the answer is unflinching, — "He is in hell!" and the father's face is turned away in natural wrath.[1] Though some of his earliest followers who took refuge in Abyssinia were of good families and not without means, most of those who heard gladly the preacher of equality and a simple faith were poor, ignorant, and despised persons, many of them slaves.[2] Naturally enough, — the data of that problem being then as inscrutable and inconclusive as they are now, — he could give but an incoherent account of the methods by which the Divine will was made known to him. Sometimes the revelation was gentle, sometimes like the ringing of bells, "which rent him in pieces;" and the interjectional outbreaks and transitions of the Suras confirm his story.

Mobbed, stoned, assailed by plots and passions, his followers driven from Mecca, outlawed, imprisoned, or starving, for ten years Mahomet struggles on, never doubting the sovereignty or the purpose of his Guide. The first gleam of success comes through the old hostility of the desert to the city, — in the conversion of two Bedouin tribes, more from hate to Meccan aristocracy than from love to him or to each other; and from their jealousy of the Jews of Medina, against whose claims of a Messiah they were glad to set a prophet from their own race. Then out of the enmities of Mecca and Medina came the seventy Helpers (*Ansâr*) of the latter city, who offer him the one possible refuge. At last he must flee for his life, with but one companion to share his perils, save that the God of his old desert struggles makes the third; for whom, as the legend runs, nothing stronger than a spider's web across the cave's mouth was needed to save the servant of His will.

It is a commonplace, even for liberal Christianity, that the life of Mahomet of itself proves on how much lower

[1] Dozy: *L'Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 57. [2] Sprenger: *Das Leben*, etc., i. 392.

and narrower a plane his religion stands than does that of the gospel of Christ. There is great need of careful discrimination in the study of religious ideals; but how can a more universal conception possibly be framed, *so long as we stand within the limited idea of Personal Revelation*, than that of one sole God of heaven and earth, making known His will by sovereign choice of instruments, "in mercy to all mankind"? Nor can anything broader and more humane be easily imagined, under these limits, than Mahomet's obedience to a moral and religious instinct in the shape of such a conception. "For this," he says, "I ask of you no wage but the love of my kin." [1] The demands of humanity were always closest, in his mind, to the heart of God. The fear of becoming poor through giving to others was a diabolic suggestion. Giving for righteousness' sake "is like a grain of corn that produceth seven ears, and each ear a hundred grains." [2] All he had and gained was spent on his work, and he left neither debt nor substance behind him. "Shall they have a share in the kingdom, who would not bestow on their fellow-men the speck in a date-stone?" [3] "He who shall mediate between men for a good purpose," says this reputed "Prophet of the Sword," "shall be the gainer thereby; but the mediator for evil shall reap the fruit of his doing." [4] When he said, "Let there be no compulsion in religion," [5] his conduct showed that he meant it.

His first success was uniting hostile tribes in a common faith and purpose, substituting referees for the old tribal blood-penalties, inducing each of his Meccan followers to choose a brother among the jealous Helpers of Medina, and planting such germs of cordial relations among all believers.[6] It shall be an "expiation with God" when one shall drop his right of retaliation according to the

[1] Sura xlii. 22. [2] Sura ii. 263. [3] Sura iv. 56.
[4] Sura iv. 87. [5] Sura ii. 257. [6] *Ibn Hishâm*, i. 250.

old Jewish law.[1] Wrangling over creeds is his abhorrence. "What, wilt thou force men to believe, when belief can come only by the will of God?"[2] "Jew, Sabean, or Christian, — whoever shall believe in God and the judgment, and do what is right, on him shall come no fear."[3] The constitution, drawn up to fix the relations of his Meccan fugitives with the Jews and Christians of Medina, is to similar effect.[4] To all conquered nations he offered liberty of worship on payment of tribute; and in this he was followed by his first generals, so that the Mussulman arms were welcomed by the oppressed of every land.[5] The humiliations to which the vanquished were subjected were political only. It is evident that proselytism by the sword was wholly contrary to his instincts. His Islam itself being substantially akin to Judaism and Christianity, he was strongly inclined to adopt forms and traditions from both these faiths. It was Omar who lifted the standard of an independent religion, and nationalized Islam by centralizing its worship in Mecca as the Kebla,[6] — to Mahomet merely a matter of convenience, preferred to Jerusalem after his break with the Jews. "To God belong East and West alike, and whichever way ye turn, His face is there."[7] Appeal to the sword was involved in the practical necessities of his monarchical creed, but it was not deliberately chosen.

After the flight to Medina his followers were in great indigence, and would have been put to death but for the arms in their hands.[8] The Koreish had sworn Mahomet's death, and their army was in the field before he heard God's command to battle. Enraged that they could not use him to convert Arabia to Judaism, and that his belief was so much simpler than their Talmudic legends, the Jews

[1] Sura v. 49. [2] Sura x. 100. [3] Sura ii. 59; v. 73.

[4] Sprenger: *Das Leben*, etc., iii. 21.

[5] Dozy: *L'Histoire d'Islamisme*, p. 184. See Abû Bekr's noble counsels to his army of invasion on the march to Syria. Ockley: *History of the Saracens*, p. 94 (Bohn).

[6] Sura ii. 139. [7] Sura ii. 109. [8] Braun, p. 58.

of Medina attempted his life; and poison administered by a Jewess was believed to be the remote cause of his death. On the scabbard of his sword, the Persian legend says, was written: "Adhere to those who forsake you; speak truth to your own heart; do good to every one that does ill to you." [1] He justified anathema and war on unbelievers, at first, on account of their aggressions.[2]

"The infidels help each other; unless ye do the same, there will be great demoralization." [3] "They regard not in a believer either ties of blood or faith; when they break their oaths of alliance, and revile your religion and attack you, then do battle with them." [4]

It has been well said that it is the political rather than the religious authority of Islam that has been propagated by force. Mahomet overturned governments in the name of God, like the leaders of every other positive religion save Buddhism, but never from love or desire of mere destruction. His institutions prove this, — never hostile to proprietorship, never false to the people, never nihilistic in their iconoclasm.

The change in Mahomet's spirit towards unbelievers can never be understood by those who do not perceive that monotheism, conceived as the source of a revelation, must be exclusive and destructive simply because it is one of the necessities of its commands that they shall be executed. It is not revelations, but science and humanity, that allow liberty to doubt and deny. As soon as a positive religion has reached the point of practical organization and extension, and is brought into conflict with the forces it would supersede, it appeals to force as naturally as it appealed at first to persuasion. As soon as Christianity acquired

[1] Deutsch: *Der Islam*, p. 61. *The Hyât-ul-Kulûb* (Merrick, p. 235) draws a marvellous picture of the humanities with which he invested the cruel necessity of war.

[2] Dozy: *L'Hist. des Musul.*, i. 152.

[3] Sura viii. 74.

[4] Why Sprenger should call this perfidious, is difficult to discover. Ibn Ishâk's traditions maintain this self-defensive character of his warfare. — Sprenger, iii. 481. Ibn Hishâm, i. 230, 373, 376. Sura ix. 10, 12.

strength enough to draw the notice of the powers of this world, it forgot its non-resistance and its unworldliness, and set the example which Islam was not slow to follow. It rose to sway by a warfare even more long-continued and barbarous against every form of unbelief; mostly waged by civil and fraternal hates. To this day, wherever science has not infused a new soul, the old necessity of all revealed religions — "compel them to come in" — holds its own, in spirit, if not in power. Mahomet resisted the temptation to return blow for blow as long as it was possible. Had he been slain after a few years of his ministry, or, like Jesus, at a much earlier period of it, he would have died with words of mercy and forgiveness on his lips, — a divine man, but not the founder of a positive religion. While the prophet's function remains individual, he may follow the loftiest ideal; the conditions upon which his faith becomes accepted and organized in society are very different. Whether it is forced to meet them in his own person or in the devotion of his followers to his cause, the price is a sacrifice of that higher morality for ignoble means. In this respect, so inevitable is the logic of ideas by which each in turn shows its imperfection and enforces a better!

Once convinced of Allah's will that the new word should be received by His creatures, the Prophet naturally found in every invincible condition of that result a new divine guidance, which glorified every instinct and demand. We can only wonder that in such an age so much freedom, humanity, and constructive aim attended his steps. We can mark the period when the necessity of conquest took possession of his mind, in those haughty letters-missive to the emperors of Rome and Persia, demanding submission to the will of God. Yet on the great day of triumph, when he entered the old shrine of Mecca and broke down the idols, it was not in wrath, but in pity,—announcing amnesty

almost universal, commanding protection to the weak and poor, and freeing fugitive slaves. No self-exaltation, but the same democratic habit towards men, the same humility before God.[1] Against a few acts of severity[2] — a part of which are fully proved to have been military necessities, and a part are but indirectly his work, while all are merciful in view of what might have been expected in the situation and the customs of the times — we may put the prohibition of selling children apart from their parents, the rebuke to his generals for barbarous warfare and the effort to compensate the families of their victims, incessant care for the poor and suffering, and hosts of noble precepts for making religion one with humanity.[3] Even the list of graver charges which Renan and Sprenger have given in full, — such as direct deception for his own advantage, charged on the will of God, and a general policy of paltering with the moral law, — have in part been disproved, and in part are explicable as natural in one whose single aim was the fulfilment of an inspired mission; as Renan somewhat naïvely says, "Man is too weak to bear the burden of apostleship very long." It would be equally true to add that the sense of inspiration is simply the self-affirmation of one's whole nature, — rational, passionate, instinctive, as alike instruments to the appointed end.[4] There is no instance in history of a religious founder under these conditions so ready as Mahomet to confess his faults, whether of momentary weakness towards idolatry or of personal unkindness towards others. The early death of Jesus was fortunate for his example, but it did not alter the law of deterioration; that was only reserved for those who gave

[1] Smith, p. 128. Sprenger: *Das Leben*, etc., iii. 331.

[2] See these charges in Sprenger, iii. chap. xix. On the other side, Smith, pp. 122, 123. Freeman: *Conquests of the Saracens*, pp. 42-49.

[3] Poole: Introduction to Lane's *Selections from the Koran*, pp. lxiii-lxv. Sprenger, i. 321.

[4] Renan: *Etudes d'Histoire Religieuse*, p. 252. See Bosworth Smith, pp. 122, 123. Also Freeman: *Conquests of the Saracens*, pp. 42-49.

his church its hold on society. This burden Mahomet could not shift from his own neck.

Mahomet had a great sensuous nature, and it was doubtless a source of his success. But polygamy was the ineradicable demand for male offspring in the East; nor did his permission of it, under the conditions he enforced, add to its strength. For himself, his fidelity to his wife Khadîja during her whole life, and his devout gratitude to her to the end of his own, outweigh all charges of mere bald sensualism on the excesses of his later years. All his children were born before he entered on his mission, and all were Khadîja's. The propensity to enlarge his harem was gradually developed, and has been ascribed by Sprenger to a phase in his nervous disease. Yet the same critic has dealt much too severely with his procuring the cession of a wife from his follower Zeyd, — an act which can only be judged after a full view of the persons and relations. The supreme rights of the Prophet in these and other respects are simply analogous to those assumed by all other claimants of special revelation and authority.

Low as was Mahomet's estimate of woman and rude as Islam has always been to her in his name, devoid as the Koran is of that chivalrous spirit of which she was the ideal in the life of the older Arabs, his regulations really improved her condition, by abolishing the cruelties to female children, by limiting the number of wives for each man, punishing infidelity and kindred crimes with extreme severity, making divorces less easy and subject to severer conditions and humane obligations, and requiring proof by four witnesses of adultery on the part of a wife.[1] Mahomet gave women the right of inheritance, — half a male's part, — and the right of disposing of property; and forbade temporary marriage arrangements, besides putting the children of concubines on a level with those of wives.[2]

[1] See, especially, Sura iv.; lxv. 1–6.

[2] Sura iv. 23.

The prevailing belief that the Koran does not admit that women have souls or enter Paradise, is absurd;[1] as also the idea, hardly reconcilable therewith, that its Paradise is sensual. With all the external joys familiar to the Arab, as in all apocalyptic promises, highly colored pictures and symbols are used to attract the tastes of the worshippers; yet Mahomet, as elsewhere, subordinates the passions to the moral law.

"How happy shall be the people of the right hand! in extended shade by flowing waters and with abundant fruits, unfailing and unforbidden." "And they shall have wives of perfect purity, and abide there forever."[2]

Even Hallam admits that Mahomet did not rely on sensual inducements for the spread of his system.[3] Where have the sexes been placed on a more perfect religious equality than in the following passage of the Koran, —

"The men who resign themselves to God, and the women who resign themselves, and the men and women believing and devout, and the men and women patient, humble, fast-observing, almsgiving, chaste, — for them has God prepared forgiveness and a rich reward."[4]

That the common idea of the influence of the Koran on the condition of woman is exaggerated, at least, appears from the testimony of careful observers like Stanley Poole, who says that "in many important senses a Turkish woman has more liberty than an English, being in her home perfect mistress of her time and her property." Similar and even stronger testimony is given by Geary, Urquhart, Farley, and De Amicis, to the freedom and purity of woman in Turkey.[5] The comparative infrequency of prostitution in Mahometan countries has been generally

[1] Sura iv. 123; xiii. 23; xl. 44; xlviii. 5, etc.

[2] Sura lvi. 20–30; ii. 23.

[3] *Middle Ages*, chap. vi.

[4] Sura xxxiii. 35.

[5] Poole: *Modern Turkey*, chaps. iv. xv. Geary: *Travels through Asiatic Turkey*. Urquhart: *The Spirit of the East*, i. 252. De Amicis: *Turks of Constantinople*, pp. 212–226. Farley: *Modern Turkey* (1872), pp. 116–130.

observed; and several recent travellers have ventured to show conclusively how great are the compensations for the evils of Mussulman polygamy in the regulation and restraint of the passions. That the institutions of the Koran are no bar to the progress of woman, appears not only from the immense influence always accorded to her in public and private affairs, but from positive decisions of Imâms like Abû Hanîfa, that women could lawfully exercise the functions of a judge, and from the special honor in which they were held in the splendid days of Saracen Spain and under the great caliphs of the East, before the theologians began to preach the sinfulness of earthly love.

It was not to be expected that Mahomet should attempt the abolition of slavery. He did what had been the extent of Christian work in that direction by many mitigating precepts and laws,[1] forbidding the separation of parents and children, putting the duty of kindness towards the slave on the same ground with the claims of "kindred and neighbors and fellow-travellers and wayfarers;"[2] encouraging manumission, and therewith the gift of "a portion of that wealth which God hath given you;" and above all, forbidding sensual uses of a master's power over the slave, with the promise of divine mercy to the wronged.[3] To free a slave is the expiation for ignorantly slaying a believer,[4] and for certain forms of untruth. As we have already seen, the whole tenor of Mahomet's teaching made permanent chattelhood or caste impossible; and it is simply an abuse of words to apply the word slavery, in our sense, to any status known to the legislation of Islam. From the slave-laws of the early caliphate, by which a fugitive fleeing to Islam became free, and the child of a slave-woman followed the condition of the father, while

[1] Kremer: *Culturgesch. unter d. Khalifen*, ii. 101.
[2] Sura iv. 40. [3] Sura xxiv. 33. [4] Sura iv. 94.

the mother became free at his death, and the slave could contract for his freedom, and part of the poor-tax went to his relief, down to the institutions of modern Mussulman countries, which allow the bondman of to-day to become the grand vizier of to-morrow, the status of slaves has stood for a political incident, not a state of nature, nor even for a degraded race.[1]

It would be wrong to omit here the peculiar tenderness of Mahomet towards the brute creation. The horse and camel, true protectors of the desert man, inherit the mystic honors torn from broken idols and cowering superstitions. Islam admits into Paradise the dog of the Seven Sleepers, the whale of Jonah, the calf of Abraham, the ram of Ishmael, the mule of the Queen of Sheba, the ox of Moses, and the ass of Mahomet, — a broader recognition of the humbler forms of life and service than that of the hero of the Hindu epic who refused to enter heaven without the company of his faithful dog.

From the hour of mental anguish when he struggles to escape the conviction of an immeasurable divine task, to that in which, his message borne and his mission fulfilled, he dies, old before his time, amidst mourning companions, distributing his few goods to the poor, and murmuring of Paradise and the prophets before him, — when the devotion of Omar will not suffer him to believe the great life has departed, and he rushes out wildly to deny that it is so before the people, so that Abû Bekr has to silence him with the admonition, "Know ye that the Prophet was but a man, and has died like the rest; but let those who trust him understand that God can never die," — through all that is hard and semi-barbarous, self-delusive, and seemingly self-seeking in his thinking and doing, there is indubitable evidence of an absolute sincerity and an almost equally absolute power, natural enough thereto,

[1] Kremer: *Culturgesch. des Orients unter d. Chalifen*, ii. 18.

of attracting, convincing, and controlling men and things. His consecration to his great idea was not less perfect than its necessity to his age; and its compulsion utilized his virtues and his faults by a force of tendency beyond all measurement. He stands as the truest type of that great phase in the evolution of religious belief, — faith in authoritative private revelation from a divine sovereign Will, — whose good and evil alike are now rapidly becoming superseded by a higher. And of this faith Mahomet was the truest type among all Semitic prophets and religious founders, because he alone in his own lifetime vindicated its practical and political demands. Accordingly, his personal history will be found to associate itself more readily than those of other representatives of the class with our experience of the new phase of religion to which the old faith in positive revelations has given way.

His purely historical character; his simple humanity, claiming only to be a man among men and an imperfect instrument of the truth; his intense realism, avoiding all mystical remoteness; his rejection of miracle; the thoroughly democratic and universal form under which his idea of the divine monarchy led him to conceive the relations of men; the force of his ethical appeal; his reliance on the voice and pen, and his strenuous endeavor for peaceful interpretations of a religious ideal with which his own history is the most perfect evidence of his incompatibility, — all affiliate Mahomet with the modern world. These elements of positive monotheism are predictive of humanitarian science. The passion of Islam for science for five centuries, and its prodigious influence on intellectual progress, are not accidental; they came in the natural development of the Prophet's faith in the unity and order of the universe and the uses of this present world. These are foundations of science; and only the principle of personal Will throned above them became a barrier to liberty

and progress, especially in its human analogue of a despotic caliph or sultan. It is for these reasons that Islam has been the entering wedge for civilization among lower races. The doctrine of one God and one Prophet, speaking in strict moral edicts of unlimited authority, without pretence of theological mysteries, offers a comparatively easy step out of barbarian rites and superstitions. Unencumbered by speculative modifications, and moving with the tremendous fanaticism of the full sense of direct revelation, it has proved, especially among the tribes of Asia and Africa, capable of doing what no other positive religion could do in lifting the lowest members of the human family into the paths of brotherhood. But this is only a part of its achievement. Fertile in splendid epochs of civilization, in every form of free speculation, and in noble endeavors after the largest unities and sympathies of faith, and adapting itself to more varied forms of race and culture than any other religious proselytism, it well deserves the honor accorded it in the declaration of Oriental scholarship, that "there is no grander landmark in history."[1]

It is not my purpose to follow the fortunes of Islam in detail. It interests us at present only as interwoven with the history of Iranian religions, and thereby, in a larger point of view, as illustrating the connection between religions of personal Will by revelation and that universal form of religion which is being shaped out of free science, philosophy, and faith,—the worship of Cosmic Order, Unity, and Law. Islam is the ultimate and consistent expression of that earlier basis of authority which we have been tracing through its phases as the Iranian ideal to its abstract logical perfection in the Koran. Whatever has succeeded Islam on that line of belief is an impure intermixture and transformation of the original idea by the contact of other

[1] Cust: *Linguistic and Oriental Essays*, p. 129.

tendencies, ethnic, secular, and wholly antagonistic in their direction to its theory of origin and authority. Yet to this more rational philosophy of religion the pure monarchical idea was the transition. It was the purest conception of unity possible till this should be reached.

Intense as its germination was in Semitic Arabia, Iran was really its natural field of development. The study of the conditions to which it was subject after the conquest of the Persian empire, is of the highest historic value; and it is one which, indicating the necessities involved in revealed monotheism and its steps over into a rational faith, has, so far as I know, never been pursued. The great works of Sprenger, Weil, and Kremer, invaluable as historical researches, do not touch this point of view, save as affording worthy material for its illustration.[1] To this we shall now devote our attention.

We have found that one inevitable result of the idea of revelation by Divine Will through the prophet or mediator, whether pretending to infallibility or otherwise, has been his elevation into that supreme dignity to which his representative function legitimately points; so that he either becomes God, or is, under some superficial distinction, *practically* inseparable from God. If this was not the case in Judaism, it was because the law of Moses, as the expression of Jahveh and his will, was not made known at once by a single prophet, as Christianity and Islam were supposed to be, but was the slow product of national experience and foreign influence; and its monolatry could not be ascribed to one person, although the later priestly construction of the national literature strove hard for that end. Therefore Judaism became the wor-

[1] It should be said that the work of Kremer (*Herrschende Ideen d. Islam*) has by far the most claim to philosophical breadth of any thus far offered to the public; yet its aim is not to cover the relations of special religions to the law of their development.

ship of the Law, rather than of Moses or the prophets. Moreover, the apotheosis of a religious revelator must depend in large degree on the promulgation of his word being speedily followed by a speculative and mystical period in its development; and this period was not possible for the Hebrews until after the return from Babylon, and the conscious reconstruction of the religion in a very un-Mosaic manner. In Christianity, on the other hand, the conditions of the age favored an immediate commencement of the idealizing process; and the Will of God, as revealed in Jesus, rapidly became the divinity of Jesus himself. We shall now observe the same process in the kindred religion of Islam. Here, also, the Person *above* was soon inevitably merged and lost in the Person or Persons *below*.

Incarnation of the Personal Power, or Powers, of the universe in a human will was of course familiar to Asiatic races and religions. Buddhism carried it everywhere in its northward and westward march. The Persians had long called their chiefs gods. Brahmanism embodied it in its priesthood, every member of which was himself a Brahma. But that identity with Deity which belongs to its human organs reaches its complete form only in pure monotheism, where the unity of the original makes the process of human representation more simple and clear. It is for this reason that Islam, with all that horror of "joining gods with God," which was expressed by Mahomet, has been a hive of anthropolatry at every point of its history. This fact is of the utmost importance, as showing by the full confession of revealed religion itself the necessity of a principle more universal than its worship of a personal consciousness, which involves this localization and confinement of the ideal in powerful human personalities, or in what historical conditions have caused to appear as such.

In Islam the process began with the first establishment of the Arabs on the great rivers of Asia in the idealization of Mahomet himself. It was continued in the worship of Alî; later in that of the twelve Imâms; and still further in the immense hagiology of subsequent times.

Such is the first form under which these limitations of the class of religions now before us were apparent in Islam. There is also a second form. It is the concentration of aspiration, discussion, and momentous purpose on purely personal questions; in other words, on the rights of opposing claimants for religious honors. The relation of such facts to the law of historic development, which is merging "revealed religion" in the higher recognition and use of human reason in the discovery of truth, is at once obvious.

I. Iran, it will be remembered, is pre-eminently the land of hero-worship. Its god-kings of Assyria and Babylon, its homage to Cyrus, its cultus of Alexander, its admiration of the Sassanian Ardeshîr and Nûshirvân, made it natural that Mahomet should be greeted as the Star of the West, and that in less than ten years the whole empire should have submitted to his sway. That wonderful achievement was due to an idealizing imagination rather than to mental or moral assent. It was the immense transformation wrought by Persian intellect on Arabian zeal and passion, that made of the desert-born creed an all-constructive and enduring power.

The apotheosis of Mahomet began very early, notwithstanding the strong reaction that opened against him in Arabia immediately after his death, and the succession of the Omeyyad family (his personal enemies) to the caliphate. The sound sense of Abû Bekr, the overshadowing military and organizing genius of Omar, the historical tastes of Othmân, the extraordinary manliness and free-

dom of the leaders whom the Prophet had drawn around him, — "no mere fanatics, but men of practical insight, and susceptible of lofty impressions,"[1] — could not prevent the operation of a tendency involved in the very substance of his claim. The teacher who always assured his followers, in all humility, that as prophet he had no higher function than to transmit a book written in heaven, nevertheless did assume an exclusive commission, which absorbed his human nature in the supernal splendors of a divine election. He claimed to have been authenticated by prophetic scriptures as conveyor to mankind of saving truth direct from the mouth of God, who spake indeed in the first person familiarly from his lips. How could he fail to be regarded as the intercessor for his followers, and even for his nation as such, at the judgment and before the throne? The legend relates that Moses asked Allah to reward the good deeds of Jews tenfold, and to grant them other prerogatives over other races; but Allah replied, "These privileges are accorded only to believers in Mahomet, in whose name even Adam prayed to me."[2] Soon his intervention became necessary for the attainment of Paradise even by the good, and his name had magic virtue to the same end. Even at this day the pilgrim at his grave cries,[3] "Thou must be our advocate! Intercede, oh! intercede for us whose sins have broken our backs!" Mahomet had said, "Whoso visits my grave shall have my good word with God;"[4] and even Al Ghazzâlî, who allows the tradition that he had in his lifetime deprecated the future use of his grave for an "idol stone," is careful to observe that he had afterwards instituted this very cult.[5] The name of the Son of Abdallah is mentioned, like that of Christ in Christian churches, in every

[1] Sprenger: Appendix to chap. v. See his account of them in detail.

[2] Weil: *Biblical Legends*, 151.

[3] Kremer: *Die Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam*, p. 284.

[4] Braun: *Gemälde d. Islam*, p. 435.

[5] Kremer: *Culturgesch.*, etc., p. 296.

prayer. In every feast it is the benediction, in every peril a charm, in every grief and loss a victory over death. He had divided the Jordan by a word; he had pierced the veil that hides the innermost heavens. It was denied that he had, even in youth, been an idolater, or had ever wavered in his faith. His own brief reference to a vision of visiting Jerusalem was magnified at once into the amazing myth of Borâk and the night journey to heaven.[1] He was dogmatically pronounced sinless and infallible, the black drop having been taken from his heart by Gabriel; and the world was held to have been created for his sake.

In Arabia, the free spirit of the desert refused this personal homage, as the Jewish Christians refrained from a like homage to Jesus. The ablutions, fasts, and organized forms of his religion could take no root in the Arab's semi-nomadic life, and never supplanted the old usages, which sprung from the nature of the country and immemorial social needs.[2] But in Persia the apotheosis went on without restraint. The emanative Light, before creation deposited in Adam's loins, shining on the brows of patriarchs, expanded into twenty spiritual oceans, and avoiding contact with impure persons or with even the shadow of a doubt, — down to its perfect incarnation in Mahomet, and resolved at last into the ideal Mahomet of the pantheistic Sufis, in whom, as in Jesus, multitudes of devotees were absorbed, bearing his very *stigmata* on their persons, — corresponded essentially, if not in detail, to the Logos-Christ, the Gnostic Æons, and to the God-Christ of the later saints and mystics. This mythic exaltation, with the innumerable cosmic miracles afterwards gathered about his birth, was no imitation of Christian precedents, as

[1] Ibn Hishâm, from *Ibn Ishâk*, i. 196–202.

[2] Yet even in Arabia there was his genealogy to work on; and nothing in this kind ever equalled that of Mahomet's "mothers," traced back for ages, to the number of five hundred, every tribe supplying an ancestress, with names and branches past number. Sprenger: Introduction, chap. xlii.

Sprenger constantly intimates, but the natural evolution of this form of religious belief.[1] In the Persian "Hyât-ul-Kulûb" his ancestry are immaculate; Satan shrieks and falls headlong at his advent, and Paradise is suffused with joy. He is the crown of humility, forgiveness, and every virtue, and his presence converts the worst to humanity. So commanding are his beauty and majesty that no one could resist them, and no unjust person could stand before him till right had been done. The elements do him homage as he walks the earth, and the angel of death must ask his permission to cross his threshold to bear him to Paradise. He is lord of life and death, and his body transcends their laws.[2] Such the transfiguration of the man who would hear of no miracle but his revealed word. It is true that the Shîite prayers are generally addressed to Allah, and the Prophet and his Imâms are but remembered in them; but we shall see that the spirit, as we have just described it, must interpret the form.

No doubt his real personality had much to do with this swift exaltation. The oldest traditions testify at least of the awe and love of his companions. They say of Omar, that he cut a Moslem in two who appealed from the Prophet's judgment to his own.[3] One of his companions avowed that he should prize one of the master's hairs beyond all the gold and silver in the world.[4] His wife Ayesha is made to describe him as more beautiful than a veiled virgin; as sympathetic with every mood or experience, even with the sports of little children; as making every one in a company think that he was his most favored guest; as incapable of withholding anything he had from those who had need.[5] No Moslem ever doubted the

[1] Wâckidî, p. 36.
[2] Merrick: *Hyât-ul-Kulûb*, pp. 36, 37.
[3] *Tales of the Kaliphate*, p. 256.
[4] Wâkidî, p. 279. Muir: *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam*, Introduction, xxix.
[5] See Muir: *The Life of Mahomet*, etc., ii. 305.

authenticity of his dying words,—"By the Lord, verily no man can lay hold of me on any matter. I have made nothing lawful except what God hath made lawful, nor permitted anything which He hath in His Book forbidden."[1]

The line of personal traditions in which the divinizing of the Prophet has gone on, began at a very early period, in fact immediately after his death.[2] They had become enormous in quantity by the second century of the Hegira, though not more enormous or monstrous than those which have grown up around the Christ and his saints. The rapidity of their growth is illustrated by the fact that a compiler who died in the year 58 of the Hegira had collected three thousand five hundred from the immediate hearers of the Prophet, as rehearsed to their scholars. All the companions and contemporaries of Mahomet were busied in collecting them.[3] Before the age of the great Abbaside caliphs the science of tracing traditions through long series of verbal witnesses had become perfected, orthodoxy being of course the chief test of authority. Of the multitude of those examined by the great scholar Bokhârî, only one in one hundred and fifty stood the test of his conscientious inquiries; and of these, "modern criticism would certainly strike out half." Yet the patient honesty with which the millions of a later growth still have been wrought over by scholars to form the orthodox *Sunna* is at least respectable, and Sprenger does not despair of reducing the interminable series of authorities to something like historical value. The prodigious energy of these constructions is shown in the earliest biography of the Prophet now extant, that of Ibn Ishâk, transcribed and enlarged with great care by Ibn Hishâm, dating as far back as the early part of the second century of the Hegira.[4] The endless minuteness of

[1] See Muir: *The Life of Mahomet*, etc., iii. 277.

[2] Sprenger: *Das Leben*, etc., iii. 61.

[3] Ibid., iii. lxxxiii., lxxxv.

[4] Translated by Weil (1864). See also Sprenger (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xiv.). *Leben Moh.* iii. lxi. Mohl: *Vingt-sept ans*, etc., ii. 627.

detail, both in names and events, given us in this simple and unadorned chronicle, the treasures of contemporary poetry gathered around it, the natural appreciation of parties and situations, and the impartial hearing to their diverse reports, combine to produce upon the reader an impression of reality which is only weakened by the quiet confidence of the author in miracles as accredited facts. Not only is the supernatural power of the Prophet in full play thus early, even to the sacredness of his person from attacks, and the homage of nature to his presence, but the adoration of him has gone so far that his common replies are quoted as the words of Allah, not as his own; and his whole speech and conduct from birth to death, as well as his Koran, are evidently regarded as divine. The energy of the mythopoetic tendency in thus rapidly divinizing the founders of positive religions, especially Semitic, becomes the more astonishing when we consider how entirely the amazing capacity of the Arabs for accurately remembering oral testimony, as well as the conscientious use of it in Ibn Ishâk's researches,[1] failed even to retard the process. Nothing at all comparable to this check upon the traditional imagination existed in the Jewish mind during the infancy of the Christian records; so that the rapid formation of a deific halo about the head of Jesus became *a fortiori* a fact of easy and natural explanation.

So fruitful of personal theopoetic traditions is a revealed religion, that myriads of Mussulman teachers were consecrated to the study of this oral personal wisdom, and every corner of Islam was ransacked in the search thereof, until it came to be reckoned that the Prophet had been surrounded by one hundred and twenty thousand companions, so that not a word of God that fell from his lips could have been lost.[2] The parallel with Christian traditionalism

[1] Mohl, i. 490; ii. 445.

[2] Hishâm's *Ibn Ishak*, i. 113, 192, 290.

may be carried further; and in the later work of Wâkidî, and still more in the latest and best of all, that of the great chronicler Tabarî, who has been called not very accurately the "Livy of Islam," there is a certain degree of reaction towards a rationalistic point of view.

The rage for deification naturally acts in a monotheistic religion by concentration, once for all, upon one personal representative, as in the Christian worship of Jesus as God. Yet in Islam it takes a continuous form, always creating new objects. The reason lies in the character of the races with which this religion had to deal; in its being imposed on polytheistic antecedents in these races, who were accustomed to find a deity in every fresh phenomenon of human power. Thus the polytheistic instinct perseveres even through the change by which every newly deified man becomes the manifestation of one and the same God. In Christianity this tendency was contravened by an intense weariness of polytheistic systems in the Roman world, and a profound desire, everywhere, of political, social, and religious unity. The worship of saints, relics, and the papal power, indeed, represented it in an inferior degree; but, however practically intercepting and absorbing the worship of the one God and the one Christ, it did not theoretically invalidate the exclusive identity of the Only Begotten with the Father. Herein the worship of personal Will was less logical than in Islam, which knew no Only Begotten, and did not attempt to control the supreme purpose of incarnation within numerical limits. In Asia, in the seventh century, the freedom of Divine Will, instituted by polytheism, could not so easily be confined. Persia was not content with lifting the chief of prophets to the side of God. For five centuries the process was repeated, with teachers of new sects; soldiers, party leaders, veiled and unveiled prophets, rebellious sheikhs, — more open paths for Deity through human

organs than in the Buddhist Avatârs. The thoughtful student will recognize in both these tendencies — alike in the extreme limitations of the one and the extreme caprices of the other — the inherent inadequacy of the worship of personal Will. While in both the essential identity of the human and divine is dimly foreshadowed, and unconsciously pursued in these highest of revealed religions, they are but "the motion toiling in the gloom."

Alî, the son-in-law of Mahomet, his first great convert, his dearest companion, was the legitimate heir of his inspiration, if there was one; but the intrigues of the harem set him aside from the caliphate. To three successive exclusions from his rights he submitted with the quiet dignity of a great man. Nevertheless, the disputes among the Arab leaders as to the succession not only broke out into war, but immediately, both in Egypt and Irak, resulted in exalting Alî into an incarnation of God. The object of this adoration did not hesitate to rebuke it, and to punish the leaders. The famous Fâtimite dynasty in Africa, founded in due time upon the divinity of Alî, shows how vainly men resist the logic of beliefs. Oriental familiarity with the godhood of priests and kings, religious enthusiasm for the prophetic function which Mahomet had observed in Alî, his martyrdom at Kerbelâ by the treachery of companions, combined with the persecutions of his friends by the Omeyyad caliphs, and with the possession of many noble traits, to exalt this personal devotion into positive worship, until in Persia, where all these influences had peculiar force, the name of Alî became the symbol of the national faith. The principal sects in that country are Shîite, or Alîite, in distinction from the Western Mahometans, who hold to the *Sunna*, or traditional law, in the interest of the three Omeyyad caliphs who had superseded Alî. In their hostility to Alî, the Omeyyad family[1]

[1] Belonging to the old first families of Mecca.

represented a reaction against the authority of the Prophet and his line, — or rather an aristocratic resistance at the outset to his popular institutions, which showed itself at once in their free dealing with the Koranic laws.[1] Notwithstanding their discouragements from Damascus, the Alîites became powerful enough in Persia to overthrow their Syrian enemies, and by help of the disintegration of sects and parties to substitute the Abbaside dynasty. And though this change brought little immediate advantage to themselves, it was succeeded by a long period of internecine civil wars and dynastic strifes, through which the worship of this human god and his descendants became a mighty religious cult, and at last the very heart of Iranic faith. The Dabistân enumerates eighteen sects of this creed, and reports a Sura in Alî's honor, believed by them to have been struck out of the Koran by Othmân when he fixed the canon of Islamic Scripture.[2] Analogous emotions to those which Christians felt for the cross of Christ were, and still are, centred in the martyrdom of Alî's son Hosein, who, as suffering humanly for man, holds the full place of his father in Persian gratitude and love. This dramatic sympathy is the religion of modern Persia.[3] It is easy of course to deny all analogy between this "man worship" and the Christian adoration of Jesus. But these earliest Imâms who inherit the divinity of Alî were supposed to have really dropped their human natures, and to have been as truly absorbed into the essence of Deity as it was possible for the second and human person of that Christian trinity in unity to be, which could not be recognized in the spiritual arithmetic of the Mussulman. These Imâms (Holy Ones) were regarded as perfectly immaculate before the end of the first century of the Hegira.[4] The

[1] Renan: *Etudes d'Histoire Religieuse*, p. 264.
[2] *Dabistân*, ii. 366–368.
[3] See Braun: *Gemälde d. Islam*, p. 20.
[4] Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam*, p. 375.

line of apotheosis reaches through Persian history, ultimating in the expectation of a now hidden member, who is to come in clouds and lightnings out of his seclusion, to judge, redeem, and rule the world, as immediate representative of Alî himself.[1]

To follow Alî-worship would be to recount the intricate and endless tale of the Persian sects, which the purpose of this work requires us to present only in a few of their general bearings. The important fact is, that so completely did this new idealization efface the old primitive faith, that the Shîites became in general anti-Islamic, and flung aside the system of the founder, even to the Meccan pilgrimages, as completely as the Papacy set aside the early form of Christian worship. They have their own pilgrimages to the tombs of their own martyrs at Kerbelâ, where the Persian holds it his supreme bliss to be buried at their side.[2] For the old Arab rites they substitute stated lamentations for Hosein, and theatrical shows of his death, at which passions are aroused more vehement than ever attended the Mystery-Plays of Christendom, and not unlike the orgiac rites of Semitic fire-gods. Some of these sects cursed the Prophet himself for the sake of Alî. A somewhat philosophical form was given to the line of Imâms by the theory of a continuous revelation from age to age, according to the educational needs of mankind. Al Hakîm (Al Mokanna, the "veiled prophet" of Khorassan, as famous in Western poetry as in Oriental politics) was a propagator of Imâm divinity in its strongest form, associated with Buddhistic dogmas, with Iranian independence, and with politic and even deceitful seclusion from the sight of his followers, and placed himself confidently in the sacred line. Ismaîlism, a phenomenon of immense political influence, pursued the same track, counting seven Imâms, all included in the unity of Allah.

[1] Kremer, p. 377. *Dabistân*, iii. 368.

[2] Kremer, p. 375.

Abdallâh ibn Maimûn, an eclectic preacher holding an esoteric system woven of Gnostic, Manichæan, Buddhist, and Pârsî elements, repudiated even the descendants of Alî in their turn, in order to carry the doctrine of a hidden Imâm to its farthest limits. His initiations led up gradually to the rejection of all prevailing systems, retaining only their common idea of incarnation in some form; and his sworn bands of missionaries went out to hold him forth to the Oriental world as the Word of God. Out of his movement came the Karmates of Irak in the ninth century, who worked it up into a socialistic and predatory crusade against Islam from their fortress in Nabathean Irak.[1] They pillaged Mecca and terrified the caliphate of Bagdad, and, after a crusade against all thrones but that of their expected Imâm, established the Fâtimite dynasty of Syria and Egypt. From this in turn came a number of self-instituted incarnations,— such as Hakîm (A.D. 1021), a strange compound of the philanthropist and savage, whose return the Druses are still expecting; and Hasan-Çâbbah, the pessimistic and unscrupulous founder of the sect, named from their use of hashish *Hashîshîn*, which in the mouth of the French crusaders became *Assassins*, with the signification of murderers, — a hierarchy of nihilists sworn to passive obedience and the martyrdom that awaits the professional murderer of all eminent foes, yet combining with this religious rage of the desert most of the personal and social virtues in which all the rationalistic Arab schools abounded. The Assassin fortress of Alamut had its line of incarnations, its protests against the formalism and superstition of the older faith, until a reaction brought the sect back into the fold, but without preserving them from the retributions of another and mightier human god,

[1] Dozy, pp. 246–278. There is a story that he cheated his followers, who insisted on seeing him, by placing a row of mirrors in the hands of his wives, so that their reflections of the sunlight overwhelmed the beholders, who fell prostrate under the dazzling glory, crying out, "O God, this light of thine suffices us." — Vambéry: *Khorassan*, pp. 49, 50.

the Mongol Hûlâgû, who swept away Alamut and its literary stores as it had burned its own Hashîshîn books.

The *Nosairîs*, who are called by Gobineau the most important sect of Persia, adore Alî as the supreme God, creator of Mahomet himself! They repudiate historical Islam.[1] They take a solemn vow not to reveal the mystery of their trinity, in which Alî is the father, Mahomet the son, and Salmân the spirit. Alî's body, like the Docetic and Koranic Christ's, is phenomenal merely; but his symbol is wine, before which they fall, and know no other Kebla than his invisible face. The catechism declares that Alî created man, and is ruler of life and death; that in Mahomet he was hid as seed, and that he has appeared on earth seven times. After giving his genealogy, it gives lists of hierarchies and worlds, rites of communion and mass, similar to the Christian, and finally a store of those high moral precepts which run like a golden thread through all the phases of personal or will worship, whether of a more or less superstitious kind.[2] The most violently intolerant of these human deities were, like Al Hakîm, famous for kindness to the poor and for open ears to all the needs of their subjects. They were teachers of a Puritan morality, which had no respect for the persons of priests or kings.[3] To the Christian believer these doctrines ought not to seem blasphemous, nor the good ethics illegitimately born, since they come, like their own, out of the premises of revealed religion.

But Alî and his Imâms do not exhaust the list of Islamic apotheoses. Every sect invariably makes its founder a form of Deity, and every religious reformer has ended by becoming in this sense a gate (*bâb*) of God.[4] From the second century of the Hegira, when Bâbek in Persia cut adrift from

[1] Salisbury (*American-Oriental Journal*, viii. no. 2, pp. 235, 241, 245, 267) gives the Nosairian ritual in full, from Mahometan authors.

[2] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, iii. 302–310, where the Nosairian catechism is given, translated by Dr. Wolff.

[3] Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam*, p. 74.

[4] Braun, p. 284.

Moslem tradition into a kind of universal religion compounded of preceding ethnic faiths, and passed for a new Buddha, the substitutive process has gone on, until Mahomet himself is probably the least worshipped of the masters of Moslem faith. Every one hastens to the empyrean, the religious norm of one sovereign Will. Al Hakîm permitted the Cairo university to proclaim his divinity at the age of fourteen; and Hamza, his Persian follower, renewed the claim in his behalf only to announce himself as the Word, and Mahomet as the spirit of Evil![1] The Yezîds, ultra Shîites, who are rather unfairly called Devil-worshippers merely because they take the precaution to put themselves right with the chief of fallen angels, who is by and by to be redeemed and exalted by Allah, adore their sheikh, who said, "I who sought truth became truth, and they who possess truth shall be as I." Mirza Alî Mohammed, of Shiraz, founder of Bâbism (1842), the political pantheism of the Persian masses at the present time, declared, "He who would know the way to God can go only by me."[2] His preaching against the Mollahs and their traditions resulted, contrary to his desires, in armed rebellion; whence came terrible persecutions, and a record of heroic martyrdom unsurpassed in history, in which his own (1849) was the most noble and touching instance.[3] His pure theology and ethics, — in many respects the crown of Sufism, — his justice to the social relations, and to a love of order and peace which rebuked the fanatical passion of his followers, were really an advance on the Koran itself; and it seems by no means without reason that the Prophet is wholly ignored by him in the interest of these higher spiritual conceptions. Characteristic of all these identifications of the prophet with his God was their *political absolutism*. Mahomet and the Hebrew prophets assumed this in virtue of their commissions, even though holding

[1] Braun: *Gemälde d. Islam*, pp. 132, 133. [2] Ibid., p. 178.
[3] See a full account of the Bâb, in Gobineau's *Religions de l'Asie Centrale*, p. 267.

themselves to be merely human instruments of the Infinite. But the Hakîms and Ismaîls and Bâbs and Imâms could not be less than masters of this world, if not in their own view, certainly for their devout followers. How could it be otherwise, under religious conceptions wholly analogous to those of politico-monarchical Will? It was, in fact, through political evolution that such conceptions were reached. Where the only notion of law is the royal will, that type must be carried up into the ideal sphere, and God, with his incarnations, becomes simply "King of kings." As the death of an Oriental ruler threw an empire into utter confusion and peril, so the incarnated presence of God's will in all human affairs was a permanent necessity, which could take no other form than that of an earthly autocracy. The tendency to this identification has always been irresistible. The Roman Cæsars were deified as soon as they became politically omnipotent, and Augustus could not prevent it in his own case, though he certainly seems to have attempted to do so. It was the same with the Egyptian Pharaohs. Deification was but the reverse side of monarchy. It was an easy play of the imagination, too, for the court-poets of the East to transform a man for whom the world was indubitably made into the God by whom it was made. For the thinker, it was only to change the final cause into the efficient. "Mo'izz," says the Fâtimite poet of his prince, "is the cause of the world; he is healing; outflow of the essence of the spiritual sphere; intercessor; reflected light of God."[1] It was difficult for the free Arab individuality to come under such influences; and apotheosis, as we have seen, was not in its line. But the old monarchies of Egypt and Persia, and even the ruder tribes of Asia and Africa, had been for a long time under political conditions most favorable to the process. Judaism was a

[1] Kremer (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxiv. 491, 492).

democracy like Arabia; yet its culmination, after Ezra, was in a priestly theocracy. Its God was after the image of a human autocrat, owing to its intense monolatry of personal Will. This, moreover, caused it to bring forth perhaps the most complete illustration of human divinization in all ecclesiastical history, as soon as its own purely *individual* religious fruit was watered by Aryan political experience.[1] In truth, the superiority of law to person in religious, as in political, conceptions, is a modern idea, — a result not of Christianity, but of that mighty complex of relations, inward and outward, which we call civilization. It rests on the pure love of truth as truth, not as a revelation of individual Will nor as the gift of a special teacher. It rests on the development of intuition, science, and intercourse, bringing all exclusive volitions to the level of universal human nature and inviolable law.

It may seem that evidence enough has been given of the natural expansion of belief in personal revelation, through the very conditions of a free divine Will, over an indefinite number of human representatives thereof, who not only practically intercept the worship of a Supreme One, but — what is of more moment — foreclose the universal relation of mankind to the substance of truth and good. But we must not forget that the very extent of this expansion is a hint of the aspiration of the human faculties toward the highest spheres of thought and desire. For this reason, as well as to show how inevitably even a monotheistic faith falls into the interception above mentioned even while theoretically forbidding it, we shall try to point out the extreme development of Islamic anthropolatry.

[1] Dr. C. P. Tiele (*Histoire Comparée des Anciennes Religions*, etc., p. 492) makes the astounding assertion that "Jesus never appealed to a special inspiration of God, nor presented his word as the word of God"! It is enough to ask, how could he have failed to do so, under the circumstances of his education and ideal? The statement shows how hard it is for the highest perception of historical laws to escape the prejudices of a positive religion.

Nothing seems more incongruous with the sublime conception of Allah in the Koran than a positive adoration of saints, their tombs and their miracles. Mahomet indeed availed himself of the honors traditionally paid by the old Arab tribes to the graves of their heroes and bards. He allowed miraculous gifts to the earlier prophets, though not as a mark of superiority, since the Koran was above all miracles, the very speech of God. He firmly maintained the separation of the human from the divine by an immeasurable gulf, which it was blasphemy to deny or ignore.

"The Jews say 'Ezra is a son of God,' and the Christians say 'The Messiah is a Son of God.' They are like the infidels of old: God do battle with them! Fain would they put out His light in their mouths, taking their teachers and monks and messianic Son of Mary for Lords beside God. But there is no God save God."[1]

Nothing could be more explicit. Yet not only were the Prophet's earliest companions made into divinities, as caliphs, — not only, as we have seen, did the great leaders of sects inevitably become objects of worship, — but the process is repeated, down to the narrowest local experience, in tens of thousands of thaumaturgic ascetics, whose tombs are temples, and who live after death as real representatives of God. It seems to be as natural to the strict monotheism of the orthodox Moslem as to the pantheism of the Sufi, whose very purpose is to reach absorption in the whole as the true end of existence. In both forms it is equally common for the devotee to proclaim his own arrival at this identity with God, and to receive the worship which is its due.

Nor is this anthropolatry, from which the master would have shrunk in horror, imposed by a priesthood. Islam recognizes no such right or power in any class to grant official canonization, still less to deify mortal men. The instinct is spontaneous in the worshipper, and rests entirely

[1] Sura ix. 31, 32.

on merits and miracles in the holy man. The process lies wholly outside of the recognized rights and forms of the Church. It is, then, the unconscious following out of some logical necessity in the conception of God. It is the practical result of the theism of personal Will, a strictly human quality identified with the Supreme. So intense is this thirst for union of the actual with the ideal, that a great sheikh is quoted as saying that it is "the highest joy to believe in all who describe themselves as in union with God, even when the claim is known to be false."[1] Every age has had its perfected saint, "whose foot is on the neck of all the righteous;"[2] perhaps living unknown, and pursuing some humble trade. Every town moreover has its centre of superstitious legend. Mussulman Egypt is covered with local myths, and names shaped on divinizations analogous to those of mediæval Catholicism, in which the same logical development took place. Morocco swarms with adored Sheikhs, — literally, "elders;" Marabouts, — literally, "bound to God;" Shêrifs, — nobles, descendants of the Prophet; and Mokaddems, — representatives.[3] The *Oualîs*, ascetic missionaries of Islam for three centuries among the Kabyles of the Tell, whose influence has been in every way civilizing in faith and customs, established individually a dominion over these tribes amounting to theocracy. They are credited with ubiquity and omnipotence, and with instant command over the laws of Nature and the lives of men. In the legends these saints[4] often appear as flames of fire, which slowly resolve themselves, on approach, into human bodies in attitudes of rapt devotion; while intruders are rooted to the ground, or sent away perfumed with incense from heaven. Prayers are regularly addressed to them, and vows of absolute obe-

[1] See instances in Goldziher's article (*Rev. d. l'Hist. d. Relig.*, ii. pp. 268-281).

[2] Kremer, p. 173.

[3] Burton's *Pilgrimage*, ii. 10.

[4] See a full account of these saints, with their literature, in Colonel Trumelet's work, *Les Saints du Tell*, 1881, Introduction, xix.; also pp. 163, 174, 217.

dience assumed.[1] Their tombs are protected by their miraculous presence against invasion, and become shrines for their constant responses. In life and death all time is transparent to them, and their will is God's.[2] The necessity is too strong to endure the invidious distinction of sex: the records of Islam everywhere show equal honors to sainthood, male and female. Nunneries and cloisters, often founded by women, asylums for the divorced, are under the divine protection of female Marabouts and Ouali̇̂s. Old pagan tombs and temples and feasts have been transformed, as in Christianity, into shrines and rites of an apotheosis, not so far remote, after all, from their original purpose. Late researches by De Tassy in India, and Renan in Phœnicia, show that Islam and its kindred, Christianity, have easily accepted even the old heathen names of saints; and in many Mussulman countries the passion for divinization has kept alive the oldest forms of animal service.[3]

All this was resisted in every age by rationalistic theists and by sceptics. But from the indignant declaration of Omar, when he kissed the black Kaaba, that he did so "only because the Prophet had set the example, but that it was nothing more than a dead stone after all," down to the heroic iconoclasm of the Wahhâbees, extinguished in blood by Mehemet Alî in the present century, every protest split on the rock of an invincible necessity.

Wahhâbism was the most significant revolution ever known in the history of Islam. It was the revival, after a thousand years, of the old Arab individuality, conservative

[1] Trumelet: Introduction, xxi. [2] Ibid., pp. 19, 245.

[3] Goldziher, p. 290–300. Thus the Mussulman feast of Nôrûz (New Year) is grafted on an old Iranian solar festival, and turned (precisely like the change of the old December liberties into Christmas) into a commemoration of Alî's choice as successor of the Prophet. The Mussulman pilgrims to Egypt have adopted into their processions the sacred cats of Bubastis. The old serpent-cult of Egypt still remains under Islam. The love of trees, fishes, and other creatures is transmitted in Mussulman forms. Samson has passed into Alî, and St. George into Al-Chidr. — Goldziher, pp. 308, 309, 316, 318, 322.

simplicity, and natural scepticism, — of that reluctance of the desert tribes to receive Koranic institutions, or an intermixture of foreign cults, which demanded at the outset, "Why should we practise ablutions, who have no water; or give alms, who have no money; or pray to the Kaaba, when we have the rising sun?" Wahhâb, it has been said, played the part of Luther in Islam. He did more. He went back to the freedom of natural religion. He was no full believer in the Koran, or in the Prophet, — certainly not in the orthodox sense of belief. He denounced all mediatorship by prophets and saints, and all worship at their tombs. He assailed the *Sunna* traditions, taught the primitive democracy of the desert, noted the human limitations of Mahomet, the sinfulness of all rites but those addressed to the Supreme. He waged deadly war against wine, tobacco, rosaries, and all vanities of dress and fashion. He denounced the vicious and senseless habits of the Mecca pilgrims, the silly legends about the graves of saints. He renewed the old thunders of the Prophet among his people, and with like results.[1] The traditional dignitaries set themselves to silence him, and soon drove the new puritans to take up arms. A new destruction seemed to impend over Islam, like that which Mahomet had brought on the empires of his day. Bagdad trembled, and the tomb of Hosein itself was overturned. Mecca was captured, and a general sweeping off of mosques and trading-stalls around the Kaaba succeeded; the black stone itself was broken up, and the ornaments stripped from the Prophet's tomb. Saûd, the chief in this crusade, had great aims for the regeneration of his people. Like Mahomet, he was obliged to fight his way through to security for all; and so far as he found power, he established order and peace. Jews and Christians were unmolested, on condition of tribute. But nothing could

[1] Dozy: *Histoire de l'Islam*, p. 417.

keep those wild Semites loyal to settled government. This leader compelled obedience to law, broke up the old blood-revenge and settlement of disputes by war, enforced reconciliation, and abolished the right of rogues to find refuge by fleeing to the tent of a chief. He tried to drive the masses to mosque with sticks, and, an earlier Savonarola, made a bonfire of Arab abominations, — pipes, ornaments, and wine-vessels. It was an appeal to the best instincts, and for a while they responded bravely to the stupendous task of reforming the world. He was an expert soldier; only a tinge of avarice lessened his power; no treachery, like that of the Egyptian semi-barbarian, who finally marched to destroy the new faith, can be laid to his charge. Orthodoxy proclaimed a holy war against the iconoclast, and Wahhâbism went down before the cruelty and cunning of Mehemet Alî, who succeeded only through the untimely death of its chief. But Wahhâbism survives, because the free Arab lives. It will again rend Islam with its war on saint and relic worship, — the settled mediatorialism of a thousand years. But it will always find the orthodoxy of a revealed religion its deadly foe, because these and the like anthropolatries are the inmost necessity of such belief.[1]

II. The second point I proposed to consider in the evolution of Islamic religious monarchism is, that just as its sentiment became absorbed in personal apotheosis, so its speculative and even ethical controversy has centred in questions of personal claims. The statement is equally true of matters human and divine. Its disputes related either to the right of certain individuals to rule human thought and conduct, or else to predestination and free-will in the relations between God and man considered as distinct personalities. The great war between the cali-

[1] See Braun: *Gemälde*, etc., p. 298. Crichton: *Arabia*. Burckhardt: *Notes*, etc., vol. ii.

phate dynasties of the Omeyyades and the Abbasides was about family rights rather than any difference of principles. Shîite and Sunnite did not substantially disagree in doctrine. The question was whether Alî or Abû Bekr was entitled to the prophetic succession; and this strife for men has rent Islam into hostile halves from the beginning to the end of its history, as if to show how surely the worship of personal Will, even in the form of absolute unity, breaks up into practical Dualism and intense antagonism of wills, by its very nature. The subordinate sects have battled in the same way over the claims of the Prophet himself; and the history of free thought in Islam constantly revolves around the disposition to repudiate him as the centre of faith, and either to substitute some nearer name or names, on whom the age or region is supposed to depend, or else to come out by a strong reaction into a more perfect conception of the unity of the universe by pantheistic absorption into an impersonal substance (Sufism).[1] Christian history presents precisely similar phenomena, being founded on essentially similar notions of Deity. Its incessant strifes reveal the same enormous proportion of purely personal questions, beginning with the controversy of Jew and Gentile in the early Church over the humanity of Jesus, passing on into the battle of ages over his essence, — whether of God or like God, whether one or twofold, whether involving two wills or one only, — and then, after all this was officially and dogmatically settled, resolving themselves into the rival claims of metropolitan bishops to represent His will in church government; a dispute no sooner settled than the pontifical rule was broken up by fragmentary protestant papacies, ending only in the sublime revolt of historical and intellectual science against the assumption of a central head, historical or ideal.

[1] Kremer, p. 172.

As soon as the Prophet's death left the theology of Islam free to pass from an instinctive into a reflective stage, it divided on the question of predestination and free-will; in other words, the will of a Supreme and the will of a finite man. And this strife continued till the former was firmly established as the orthodox norm of faith. It was the natural parallel to the strife of Augustine and Pelagius in the Christian Church. The predestinarianism of the Koran was intense; and all the vehemence of Mahomet's appeals to free moral choice could not hide his belief that he was the mere instrument of Divine will, and his demand that others should regard themselves as no less so.[1] But the independence of the Arab, the intellectual energy of the Persian, the dialectical rationalism of the Græco-Syrian schools of Basra and Nisibis, were never suppressed by the absolutism of Allah and his Koran. Not for a moment during the history of Moslem supremacy has the protest against it ceased. Constantly unsuccessful, for reasons already given, it has been as constantly renewed, — the half-conscious struggles of a higher ideal by and by to be made good.

The Omeyyad caliphs, born of an anti-Mahometan stock, were indifferent, literary, luxurious. They encouraged free thought, and treated the orthodox church as the Medici treated the Church of Rome. It is true they fell into an opposite policy; but the Abbasides, who succeeded them, renewed the free movement, and led it to its culmination. While Europe lay in mental night, the Mahometan world was called on to repudiate bibliolatry and even revelation. The horror of an orthodox Spaniard at the intermixture of schools and religions which met his eyes at Bagdad in the tenth century, came to its climax when he found that no arguments were allowed to be drawn, in these

[1] See Salisbury in *American Oriental Journal*, viii. no. 1, — an excellent and suggestive article.

discussions, from the Koran or the Prophet. When the reformers had the upper hand, which frequently happened, they knew how to follow the track of all battling theological sects, applying the same inquisitorial and barbarous penalties which they had experienced from others.[1] But these are eclipsed by the stories in which the history of Moslem free thought abounds, of heroic rebukes and resistless arguments hurled by its confessors at tyrannical priests and kings, to their utter confusion and shame; and the "Acta Martyrum" of Islam would not pale beside the noblest records of self-sacrifice for conviction in any age.

Earlier discussions, such as those of the Kadarites and Jabarites, were soon merged in the rise of the great sect of Motazelites (separatists), in the eighth century, who represented free thought for many centuries. They began, indeed, by so firmly holding to the unity of God that they denied the existence of divine attributes, because as so many distinct forces they would imply that He was not one, but many.[2] They did not deny predestination as a necessity of infinite Will; they rejected free-will in man in any sense inconsistent with this. Yet they stood for human rights as against the awful objective God of the Koran. They asserted that human reason was the judge and source of knowledge. They protested against much Koranic anthropomorphism, and sought to reconcile faith with a more rational conception of Deity. The Khârijites and others opposed the sinlessness of the Prophet. The Morgites rejected the idea that God had an unlimited right to save or punish to all eternity.[3] They repudiated the dark views of life and death prevailing in the Koran, and afterwards expounded in a Calvinistic form by Ghazzâlî.

[1] Dozy: *Mussulm. d. l'Espagne*, iii. 19. Kremer, p. 241.

[2] See account of their doctrines, with abundant quotations, in Salisbury's article, *American Oriental Journal*, vol. viii., no. 1.

[3] Especially Sura liii. See Kremer, p. 18-20, 28. Kremer, p. 156.

They rejected eschatological machinery, like Es Sirât, the Bridge of Judgment, the Final Balance, and the Resurrection of the Body.[1] The protests of these sects developed into a positive religious philosophy, which for a long while antagonized the orthodox belief in predestination, and that worship of the Koran as an *uncreated* form of Divine will to which the Prophet had certainly given the first impulse. They combined with their refusal to personify Divine attributes insistence that man could fulfil the moral law even without the intervention of prophetic revelation. They had no mercy on miraculous traditions, Hebrew or Arab, or on the immoralities they detected even in the life of the Prophet.[2] Ibn Koteybah carries back the beginnings of this liberty of thought to old Arab times, but the historical founders of it were the Persians Hasan and Wâsil; and so great was its influence in cultivated Iran, that princes and even caliphs were among its followers, — among them Mamûn, Rashîd, and Mansûr. Under these caliphs it produced a true revival of letters analogous to the European Renaissance, accompanied, we may believe, by similar frivolities and extravagances of license.[3] Even after the school had lost its influence at court, its liberty animated the whole intellectual life of western Iran. The gist of the Motazelite protest was directed against the autocracy of Divine Will; against an arbitrary determination of the soul's destiny, which superseded the moral law. Nazzâm, a teacher of the ninth century, distinctly taught that Allah had no power to create the evil actions of men, or to determine their future rewards and punishments by any other test than their natural moral deserts. He went so far as to deny volition in any known sense to the Divine perfection, which is superior to choice.[4] The Shâh-Nâmeh

[1] Kremer, pp. 271–273; also 20–28. [2] Ibid., p. 148.

[3] Dozy, pp. 199-207. Crichton: *Arabia*, chap. xii. Palmer: *Haroun Al Rashid.* Kremer, p. 149.

[4] Steiner: *Mutazilitun*, 5, 56, 57. Kremer, p. 31. Salisbury, as above, p. 158.

says, "The world is God's work, by virtue not of volition, but of His nature."[1] Ibn Abbâd even maintained that God could not be self-conscious, because that would imply a distinction in Him of the knower and the known; nor yet conscious of things apart from Himself, which would involve dependence on an outward world. Both Jubbâî and his son taught that "since God has prescribed duties to man, He is bound to perfect human reason, to come to the support of human ability and free-will, and do away with their weakness in respect to His commands."[2] These and many other similar Motazelite theses, drawn by Professor Salisbury from the writings of the historian Sharastânî, combined with the earnest affirmations of free-will, and refutations of the orthodox dogma of eternal decrees, strikingly suggest that the system of belief against which the later free-thinkers of Christendom have found themselves obliged to contend is not specially revealed in Christianity, as its supporters conceive, but is evolved by necessary logic out of the very substance of anthropomorphic worship. Later Motazelite teachers fell into predestinarian tendencies, even though maintaining opposition to other anthropomorphic beliefs. The controversy went through various attempts at reconciliation between human consciousness and sovereign foreknowledge and decree, which of course proved vain, and ended in the triumph of absolutism. The reasons for this issue were partly political; but the invincible recurrence to Fatalism claimed its own at last from every true Mussulman.

But the absolutism of which we speak is not to be conceived as unaffected by the struggle with the opposite principle of liberty. Fate, in the Mussulman mind, as the Koran itself fully shows, is as far as possible from suppressing the spontaneity of instinct or will. No Scriptures are more intensely moral, no history more replete with

[1] Salisbury, p. 164. [2] Ibid., p. 170.

heroism, personal independence, enthusiastic zeal, than those of Islam. For the sense of necessity has, besides the outward, also an inward side; it attaches not to the edicts of a Divine Will alone, but to the moral impulses and convictions, the patriotic and humane instincts. In proportion as its forces are absorbed on the *human* side, they become an unconscious antidote to the logic of absolute religious monarchism. They back the calls of duty, valor, love, with an infinite pressure. They are not a master's edict, but a prestige and prophecy beyond fear. We have seen that fate is a factor in the noble pantheism which, instead of subjecting man to Nature,[1] lifts man and Nature at once into godhood, and makes him capable of the most sublime virtues. It is equally true that the most effective force in moral and intellectual culture is that kind of necessity which consists in the invariable sequence of cause and effect, — at once the guarantee of scientific truth and the knell of all dire chimeras of supernatural volition. Necessarian freedom, if not in its scientific yet in its moral forms, has certainly proved a mighty counteraction for Islam to the predestinating Will in which the personal worship of Allah has been most strongly intrenched. It is a foregleam of the religion of inviolable law.

It was after a hundred and fifty years of this Motazelite strife that orthodoxy succeeded, by its control of the phraseology of religious tradition, in condensing into systematic form that modified anthropomorphism, resting on the revelations of a creative Will and their reception with blind faith, which the Koranic logic required. At the close of the ninth century of Christianity (883–935 A. D.) Asharî of Basra gave Islam its great Confession, or catechism.[2] He defined the crucial point of God's relation to

[1] See the Author's *India*, chapter on "Pantheism."
[2] See Kremer (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxi. 166–169).

His attributes in a purely homoousian manner, and denied the Motazelite idea of his amenability to the moral law.

"God must not be held to be the absolute goodness, but rather the absolute king. The Koran, as His word, is uncreated, though the Prophet and his language are created. Creation is from nothing, by His will, without change in His consciousness. Even his predictive knowledge, out of which predestination proceeds, is without effect on his experience."

Two centuries before Asharî, however, substantially the same system was evolved from the idea of the Koranic God, and its rehabilitation after ages of controversy showed that its very early origin was entirely legitimate.[1]

But Asharî's Confession pointed forward to a greater. Every positive religious system finds the representative of its logical results, from whom its permanent creeds proceed, by whom its historic values are made effective. He is one who, having passed through the contending phases of protest which it involved, rests at last in the natural consequences of its central principle, and adopts them in pure, unquestioning faith. This is Buddha's relation to Brahmanism; it is Augustine's to Christianity; it is Luther's to Protestant bibliolatry; it is Ghazzâlî's to Islam. The most famous Moslem teacher of his time, contemporary of Firdûsî, a leader in the schools of Bagdad, Damascus, and Nishapur, Ghazzâlî passed in his experience from the spirit of Descartes to the spirit of Bossuet, from intellectual scepticism to supernaturalistic faith, from the appeal to consciousness to the appeal to revelation. Yet the very name of his great work indicates that by his time orthodoxy had absorbed what it could not ignore in the liberalism of two centuries, and was attempting to reconcile the natural and supernatural, as modern Christian philosophy has tried to do, as not inconsistent parts of one great system of divine Will. His "Revival of Re-

[1] Kremer, p. 40.

ligious Science" is in many respects a resort to the mysticism which readily covers any desired interpretation of religious phraseology. He praises wisdom as far higher than mere belief, and opposes the fanatical dogmatism which rejects all rational inquiry; while he supplements the limitations and uncertainties of reason by a prophetic intuitive faculty above experience, by which the absolute trust of the Sufi is to be reached. At the same time he protests against that excessive and final form of absorption in God which most of the Sufis pursued.[1]

It might seem from this that Ghazzâlî had some glimmer of those transcendental necessities of thought which condition experience instead of proceeding from it, and are the foundation of all scientific processes whatever. Yet his faith is based, after all, on the failure of the human element and the externality of the Divine. "God made reason, and said, 'Go forward,' and it went forward; 'Go backward,' and it went backward."[2] Metaphysics were nothing but the handmaid of revelation; the analytic philosophies of his day were the bane of truth; he scouts mental certitude and denies the principle of causality, for which he substitutes a direct action of Deity.[3] God has human faculties, without human limitations or organs; and creates by pure will all good and evil, works and ways and issues of man, all in a perfect justice and wisdom, which are in fact definable by his will alone. He adores the Koran, and insists strictly on its rites; thinks the Kaaba will one day wake and bear witness with eyes and tongue.[4] So necessary is response to the reading of the prophets, that a hearer should force himself to *seem* moved when he is not so, and cultivate the gestures that his heart does not

[1] See *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1847, p. 183.

[2] Ihjâ, analyzed by Hitzig (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, vii. 177).

[3] Renan: *Averroës*, pp. 98, 99.

[4] Hitzig (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, vii. 172–180). Franck: *Dict. d. Science Philos.*, — "Alzazel," p. 608. Kremer, pp. 45, 46.

prompt, in hope that they will at last come of themselves.[1] Nevertheless, his ethics, when they do not touch theology, are pure and noble.

"Knowledge is a joy for its own sake, and will ever receive reverence from men."

"Where is the equal of a true friend? While thy relations wait to divide thy goods after thou art gone, the friend will be mourning for thee, meditating on what thou hast been to him, and praying for thee in the night, while thou sleepest in the ground."

Mahomet said, "When a man dies, people say, 'What has he left behind?' but the angels say, 'What has he sent before?'"[2]

"No wild horse needs a firm rein more than thy soul; the wise agree that heavenly joy can come only by the renunciation of earthly."

"For the spirit, sorrow is better than joy."[3]

Ghazzâlî's precepts on personal independence, on moral discipline, on self-purification, on practical kindness, and on the culture of the young, are creditable to his mind and heart. He denounced the immoral and useless lives of the Kadîs of his line. The history of his solitary struggles, his dumbness, his wanderings and gropings for ten years, ends, as with many thoughtful natures on whom a positive religion has a constitutional hold, in his finally casting himself absolutely into its arms. In him, as in most, the grip of such a religion is usually most effective by its terrors concerning death and a future, which are seen in the fearful light of a sovereign Will. Ghazzâlî developed the warnings of the Koran on this subject, long before him rejected by the Morgites and others, into a dread picture of the agonies of dying sinners, which has left its doleful echoes in all true Moslem souls.[4]

With the triumph of orthodoxy, signalized by the work of Ghazzâlî, — of which the modern orthodox say that "were all other works lost, Islam could be restored from

[1] Kremer, p. 130.
[2] Hitzig (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, p. 182.)
[3] Ibid., pp. 185, 186.
[4] Ihjâ, quoted in Kremer, p. 271.

it alone," — began the age of persecution. Creation by Will, predestination, eternity of Scripture, reason sunk in revelation, were the shibboleths by which every man should live or die.[1] Motazelites and all other heretics were put to the fiery trial. Kâdir and Motawikkil in Bagdad (1017–1018), and Mahmûd in Ghaznî, proved their God supreme, above mental freedom or morality, by bloody reactionary edicts against both, — true counterparts of their own political despotism.

In Spain, the same logical necessities were developed more rapidly than in the speculative East. The compromise between Islam and Christianity, inevitable in that country, did not render either party less intolerant within its own sphere. But in spite of the burning of books and the banishment of philosophers, a rationalistic reaction occurred even in Spain. There were sects in the eleventh century that taught religious impartiality, and even a kind of agnosticism. Others reduced all religions to efforts of man's ethical nature to reach truth, and made its laws the sole bases of knowledge.[2] They had large glimpses of universal religion. Great writers, like Ibn Bâdja, Ibn Tofail, Ibn Roshd, flourished in those palmy days of liberty, and felt the terrors of their departure. But the intolerant clergy of Christianity had their counterpart in the orthodox Mollahs, who ruled thought with the iron hand of their canon law, committed the free philosophical works of Eastern thinkers to the flames, and denounced even the orthodoxy of the Eastern world with holy horror. Al Ghazzâlî himself was excommunicated, and his book burned for its attacks on the theological hair-splitting of the canon law.[3] A puritanic reformer, whose followers came to Spain from the Berber tribes of Africa in the twelfth century, had proclaimed himself a Mahdî in the usual manner, beginning with miracle and ending with

[1] Kremer, p. 43. [2] Dozy, p. 356. [3] Ibid., 367.

persecution. These sectarians founded in the twelfth century the dynasty of the Almohades, whose bigotry quenched the splendors of the great times of the Omeyyades and Almoravides of Cordova. For thinkers like Averroës and Maimonides, orthodox Islam had no more toleration than orthodox Christianity; and both alike made of Spain a vast inquisition for extirpating freedom of thought.[1]

The Motazelite controversies in Persia are easily explained by the continuities of religious history. In the collision and intermixture of Oriental beliefs in that country at the time of the Mussulman conquest, this great protest of rational thought against the orthodoxy of Koranic revelation was inevitable. It was by no means of Semitic origin. The Semitic mind of itself had little tendency to philosophy or logic; and its immense services in this direction throughout the Middle Ages were due to its focalizing and kindling effect upon the Greek, Syrian, Persian, and Latin, — in other words, the Aryan elements with which it came into contact. Rationalism could hardly find root in the personal monarchism of the Koran; but it could hardly fail to be provoked and intensified by such despotic constraints. Islam, on its part, was surrounded by a crowd of separatist sects, breaking forth everywhere out of the free speculative spirit of Iran, representing every shade of doubt, disbelief, indifference, and fanaticism, as well as of rational inquiry and mystical faith. These were the issues of that spiritual ferment which had followed the blending of heretical Christianity with heretical Pârsîsm, of the Gnostic and the Zendik, the Manichæan and the Mazdakite, sometimes expanding into universality and sometimes sinking into communism and immorality. Into this strife of elements Islam infused the passion of monotheistic Will and personal revelation. Yet through all these later products the most conspicuous force was

[1] Dozy, p. 380.

reaction against that central autocratic dogma which stood armed alike with the zeal and the sword of Islam, — Semitic self-abnegation before a supreme master of body and mind. The Motazelites soon found themselves substituting definitions of revelation, Koranic inspiration, creation, as results of natural laws, for such as were required by the orthodox theory of Divine free volitions; in other words, they proceeded to put universal reason in place of personal caprice. It is curious to note that the world has never seen fuller liberty of discussion on speculative themes than has over and over again signalized Mahometan rule in the East. It seems as if the confidence of the great Mussulman emperors — like Akbar, Al Mamûn, Al Rashîd — in their own doctrine of the one God led them at first to imagine that bringing together the varieties of human belief must result in a spiritual unity analogous to that which they had effected in the political sphere. It proved equally impracticable in both spheres to establish permanent unity so long as the autocratic basis stood. Both were incessantly rent by discord. However liberal the spirit of the ruler, it was inevitable, not only that every question of belief should become absorbed into that of the supreme rights of Divine Will over human reason, but that orthodox Arabic theology should back down upon the freedom it had forced into life, in its best disciples. Even Hindu reformers, inspired largely by older Aryan philosophy, — such as the Moslem prophets Nânak, Bâber, and others, — all insisted on the need of an inspired teacher, who should stand to the pupil in place of God. In fact, orthodox Islam has striven for a thousand years to escape anthropomorphism by logical subtleties and large interpretations of the monarchical absolute; yet, after all, the old unlimited and unconditioned Will that dictated the Koran stands fast, as root and master of the moral law, and God is really an Oriental despot. Yet

even here the qualifications of arbitrary power are great, as we have already seen in our previous studies of Oriental civilizations.

Nothing can show more conclusively the necessity of these results than the fact that the *Kalâm*, or Mussulman Reason (*Logos*), after being the inspiration of a widespread liberalism and free discussion in the great schools of Islam, was, even after the infusion of Greek thought into Persian, turned, in the *Moticallemîn* schools, into the chief organ of orthodoxy in defending Semitic orthodoxy against the assaults of science, — the very soul of persecuting fires.[1] In the sixteenth century Sharânî, the modern apostle of theological conciliation in Islam, still adhered to the old conceptions of God as seated on a throne, of a predestinating Will, of miraculous evidence of Divine commission, of revelation as higher than reason, with all the mythic accessories of Koranic eschatology.[2] Until very recently, as was true of the Christian treatment of the Bible for a thousand years and more, no translation of the Koran was made into popular tongues. To put it to press was forbidden as impious by the four great orthodox sects. Nevertheless, the cry of the mind for freedom has never been silenced, as our immediate purpose is to show.

The force of those inherent qualities which necessitated the triumph of monarchism in Islam (as they must, if not neutralized from without, in every other religion of the same class) cannot be appreciated without the careful study of an immense accession to the resources of free thought, which, though associating Islam with the great world-movement of future ages by direct consequences, yet proved wholly unable to overcome the logic of autocratic

[1] Renan: *Averroës*, pp. 105, 106.

[2] Analyzed by Flügel (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xx. 1–48). Kremer, p. 252.

Will. I refer to the early introduction of the Aristotelian writings through the schools of eastern Iran, whence they spread to Spain, France, Germany, and Italy before the middle of the thirteenth century. To expel this mighty master of those who trust in Nature and law from the whole field of study, was the great aim of Mussulman orthodoxy, as it was for a long while of Christian, and for similar reasons. The free-thinking Greek was understood to teach eternal immanent law as the secret of divine and human, of soul and sense alike, in place of voluntary creation of the finite in time; to remove predestinating Will from the notion of divine perfection; to undermine the recognized grounds of that future state of rewards and punishments on which the Koran rested, by uniting matter and spirit in one conception, and as sides of one process on which individual existence was dependent; and, finally, to conceive Nature and man, as well as God, to be objects of free and independent inquiry.[1] It was seen that here was a foe more dangerous than the Motazelite, because far more systematic, scientific, and learned. The God of Aristotle, as prime mover of the universe, immaterial and unchangeable, was associated with it, not as a pre-forming Will, but by the law of his being as the realized perfection of that very process from potentiality (*dynamis*) to fulfilment (*entelecheia*) by which each being and thing became an individual; thus, and thus only, partaking of the nature of universals. While, therefore, as the sole absolute *entelecheia*, God is in one sense completely apart from all these finite and imperfect ones, He is, as that which they all pursue, the inspiration and end of all being. The idea, the universal, the abstract divine, is for Aristotle not like the Platonic Ideas, — archetypes existing before the individual; nor yet is it found by abstraction or combination of the individuals. It is only in the individual, in the concrete; it exists only

[1] See Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, xi. 7.

as positive energy, a transformation of Matter, which is its empty possibility, into Form, which is its essence. These postulates, however unfamiliar their phraseology, are as far as possible from materialistic in our sense. They are no more so than the Platonic philosophy to which they are in some respects strongly opposed. God, with Aristotle, is strictly immaterial as perfected Form,— the absolute Energy of principles. Knowledge is no accumulation of detailed sensations under the name of experience. It has its "origin and end in necessary principles, beyond demonstration; apprehended by the *nous* without reasoning," as the condition of its own energy. This perception, constantly recurred to by Aristotle, is properly translated *intuition*.[1] It is in the light of these transcendental postulates — the foundations of all genuine thinking since the world was made — that the subtile duality of the soul in Aristotle's system, on which there has always been so much dispute, must be interpreted. He conceives the soul as on the one hand a passive possibility or finite material, and on the other as partaking of the "active, universal intellect," which realizes itself in the same; and, though inseparable from its concrete form, is itself supremely real, and the true end of all knowledge of particular beings and things.[2]

The practical meaning of this system for Islam was in various ways a revolution. Thus, as the Divine Life can be no creative and controlling Will, but is evermore simply the pure perfection of all energies, so the human mind can be no mere creature of such a higher Will, but is itself an active energy, free to shape the matter of its inherent powers into their highest individual form. As a religio-philosophical ideal, the God of Aristotle, although not

[1] *Ethics*, vi. vi. 2; xii. 6.

[2] See Bohn's edition of the *Metaphysics and Logic*. Also Ueberweg: *History of Philosophy* (Eng.), i. 160. Renan: *Averroës*.

altogether beyond the confines of a self-conscious individual Will, was yet an open door out of the monarchical logic of a revealed religion. As the one substratum of the universal and individual, He satisfied the theistic instinct of the freer Mussulman mind, at the same time thoroughly supplanting the autocratic motive by the scientific. His cosmos was an evolutional whole, a harmony of progressive ascents from the inorganic to the organic, plant to animal, thence to rationality in man and his unity with God, each grade pursuing its own natural purpose, its highest possibility by the law of its own being. I am tempted to picture the manifold stimulus which the study of Aristotle was suited to give to the finer elements of Islam. The reality of this world, the necessity of progress in the study and use of it, neutralized those hopes and fears concerning a future world by which revealed religions have absorbed the interest of mankind in the distant and unknown. Men could not think of essence as inseparable from matter, of phenomena as containing the *noumena;* they could not conceive of the universe itself as eternal (that is, *forever* involved in the motive energy of the prime mover), without escaping the purely passive attitude of the Koranic faith towards a supernatural world. Through the subtile mazes of Aristotelian psychology, the one clear clew is the impulse to incessant mental achievement, to self-conscious study and experience, as the end of Nature and man. It was the function of Aristotle to awaken this aspiration in a scientific form, to give the keys of the universe to the free reason of man. He turned the full force of it on concrete individualities, while making their whole value consist in the universal which they enshrined. What could be nobler than to teach men to regard the form, the end, the cause of being as the ultimate of truth, and to regard the soul as the purpose of the body's existence, not as its creation; as the light from Deity, not derived from

it, but found in it; as the activity by which its phenomenal life, as passive and receptive, became real, and the individual a force of universal law?

His searching analyses of concepts and objects, so absolutely different from the operations of faith, enforced exact thinking, and summoned to a Socratic self-study, which became the light of ages, and has not yet ceased to inspire philosophic thought. His encyclopedic survey of physical science, terrestrial and cosmical, through spheres of continuous ascent, however imperfect and erroneous, pursued the ideal of systematic coherence and universal unity, with an interest in every minutest fragment of truth, never surpassed in the history of thought. It announced that the world rests on the authority and invariability of law, and that every law has inherent, commanding relation to the mind of man.

The Organon of Aristotle, as it was afterwards called, taught the ages to think; his physics, to observe.[1] Here is indeed the true father of science, who defines it as "the knowledge of things by their causes," and describes doubt as the only condition of knowledge, and knowledge itself as "the solution of doubts;" while they who fail to "hear all adversaries,"[2] and entertain all rational suspense of belief, are "like persons who know not whither they go."[3] What a reveille for every human faculty to its utmost assertion and endeavor was that insistence on the *entelecheia*, or realization of its own possibilities by

[1] Lange, a thorough materialist, if I understand him, who hates all systems that start from self-consciousness (*History of Materialism*, i. 90), opposes (not fairly, as it seems to me) Aristotle's "anthropomorphic teleology" (i. 83). Yet even Lange admits that his system is "the most perfect example in history of a theory of the universe as a united and self-included whole" (i. 96). It is hardly necessary to dwell on the Aristotelian identity of matter and form, the universality of the latter being the final purpose of the former, in distinction from the Platonic separation and even opposition of the two, as an anticipation of the modern scientific conception of matter and spirit, of subject and object. With this direct attachment of thought to Nature came initiation into the physical sciences by the hand of a master. See also Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxi. 118).

[2] Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, v. i. *Ethics* vi. 7.

[3] Ibid., ii. 1.

every being and force! What stimulus to the fine arts was his close analysis of their mutual relations and finest functions, as expansions of finite experience into universal thought and feeling!

We cannot wonder at the instinctive rejection by traditional supernaturalism of such a foe to the authority of the Koran. No peril could be more subtle and incisive. The self-conscious God of Aristotle was still sufficiently anthropomorphic to offer an easy and attractive transition for the Mussulman thinker from the bonds of revelation, and to prompt a natural reaction to the free inquiry of which he stood in such absolute need. To these attractions must be added the fine sense of natural limitation, which led Aristotle to avoid ontological speculations, and fasten the mind on fruitful positive research. Still further, there was a vast and instant interest awakened in the Mussulman world by the science of the Greeks, through the *fatalistic element*, which might seem to forbid such interest, but which has always played so essential a part in all human progress and power. Stripped of personal caprice, it is, in some form, absolutely requisite to the ideas of order, of science, of philosophy, and must have prepared the way in Islam for a sense of necessary relation, and so of unity and law.

The Ethics of Aristotle had even greater dignity and fascination than his physical and intellectual system. They rest on free reason, on a natural power of obedience and conformity thereto, and on the constant energizing of belief in the form of conduct. In this only are happiness and power.[1] Here, too, his method is transcendental, based on the perception of necessary truths beyond demonstration, by the intuitive reason, as the beginning and end of knowledge. The origin and culture of morality are thus planted in thoroughly human and independent

[1] *Ethics*, ii. vi. 10; i. vii. 10; x. viii.

grounds.[1] No moral action in a human sense is ascribed to God, since the necessity of choice or suspense would degrade his perfection. Neither do the sanctions of virtue come from a future state of rewards and punishments. That sublime principle of the "end in itself" as the motive of endeavor swept away every obstacle to the disinterestedness of moral struggle. Man is naturally designed for moral relations. His function is to fulfil the law of his being; and this function is conceived as his being's final cause, yet not a result of conscious divine intent. To what, then, does character appeal? To a universal ideal conscience superior to the mere individual desire, being reached by the fulfilment of ethical conditions by human experience. Thus substantially the good man is the measure and rule of goodness.[2] At the same time this moral standard tends to coincide with the grand principle of an objectively "active intellect," or truth, in God, — the really everlasting life amidst the transiency of individualities.[3] Has a freer or nobler basis of ethics ever been devised?

Reason is the sanction of morals; and balance, or the mean between extremes, determines the specific forms of virtue, — to modern thought a questionable rule, as it is apparently quantitative rather than qualitative, and so not sufficiently absolute for the antagonism of right and wrong, in the view of Kant and others.[4] Yet nothing could be nobler than the practical ideals to which it led.

"Not a man, but reason, should rule; since by ruling for self, man becomes a tyrant."[5]

"Friendship is in loving rather than in being loved. . . . It is in equality, especially between the good. . . . A friend is another self. . . . When men are friends, they do not need justice; but when they are just, they still need friendship."[6]

[1] *Ethics*, vi. i.; vi. vi.; vi. x. *Mag. Moralia*, i. 35. See also an admirable article in *Westminster Review*, January, 1867. And Grant's *Ethics of Aristotle*, i., Essay v.

[2] *Ethics*, iii. iv. 5; x. v. 14.

[3] *Metaphysics*, xi. vii. 5.

[4] Grant: *Ethics of Aristotle*, i., Essay v.

[5] *Ethics*, v. vi. 5.

[6] Ibid., viii. viii. 4, 5; viii. i. 5.

"A good man bears the accidents of fortune most nobly and always suitably, as faultless as the cube." "He is brave who bears death or wounds because it is honorable to do so."[1]

"There are cases in which pardon is granted, when one does what he ought not, owing to causes too strong for human nature. But there are things which it is wrong to do even on compulsion, which a man should undergo most dreadful sufferings and even death rather than do."[2] "Suicide is cowardly, for it does not seek death because it is honorable, but to avoid evil."[3]

"The magnanimous man, in the greatness of his merits, is in the highest place; but in his proper estimation of himself he is in the true mean."

"Men are most apt to be deceived by pleasure, choosing it as the good, though it is not so."[4]

When Aristotle says that "deliberate preference," that is, real moral choice, "can only be desire of things that are within our power,"[5] he shows that his rule of "balance" (or the mean) was simply the noble sense of liberty as the fruit of right limit. It is pure spontaneity. "What is done virtuously, is done without annoy; honorable actions are for the sake of the honorable, and the right act is the pleasant act."[6] Finally, to sum all, is this noblest of moral affirmations: "We *exist* by energy, by living and acting. He who has produced a (real) work loves it because he loves his existence."[7] Surely Semitic passion, at its Moslem fever heat, may well have sought the disciplines of an ethical "balance" so commanding, so wise, and so brave.[8]

But what could be a more welcome relief from that *political* absolutism in which Moslem orthodoxy centred, than Aristotle's firm demand for entire mental freedom, his recognition of reason as the rightful ruler? What so acceptable to the early Arab instincts, or to the individ-

[1] *Ethics*, i. x. 7. [2] Ibid., iii. i. 8, 9. [3] Ibid., iii. vii. 11.
[4] Ibid., iv. iii. 5; iv. 6. [5] Ibid., iii. iii. 12.
[6] Ibid., iv. i. 6. [7] Ibid., ix. vii. 5.
[8] For many fine illustrations of Aristotle's ethical philosophy, see Mayor's *Ancient Philosophy*.

uality of the Iranian genius, as those bold political speculations in which tyranny, oligarchy, and unbridled crude democracy are shown to be the worst forms of government, and the end of the State is pronounced to be the good of the whole![1] With what force must it not have appealed to the thoughtful scholar of Bagdad or Basra, in Irak or in Khorassan, to read in his Greek master that "authority in Persia, especially parental, is founded on tyranny;" that "justice is the most excellent of virtues, and is more admirable than the morning or the evening star;" that nevertheless "equity is nobler even than justice,"[2] because it supplements the inequality of general laws; above all, that equity is the corrector of edicts, and higher than the written law! Even those doctrines which appear most contrary to modern humanity, such as the righteousness of slavery under certain conditions, the depreciation of woman, and the inferiority of mechanical labor, could have found no serious protest in the Islam of the eighth century, as they certainly did not either in Greece in Aristotle's own time or during many ages of Christianity. Their seeming harshness will be much modified by the study of his meaning. Thus he justified slavery only among "those whom Nature had fitted to be happier in that state than out of it;" only for "those who have just reason enough to know that there is such a faculty as reason, without being endued with the use of it."[3] But even here "the interests of master and slave are one; and to govern ill is evil to both the governor and the governed;" so that "a mutual utility and friendship is proper between them."[4] "A slave should be trained by his master to such virtue as he is capable of, *not as mere servile drudgery*."[5] "And if it is necessary that both sides should have some noble qualities, why should one *always* govern and the other

[1] *Politics*, vii. xiii.; v. vii. ix.; vii. ii. [2] *Ethics*, viii. x. 7; v. i. 12; v. x. 4; v. x.
[3] *Politics*, i. v. [4] Ibid., i. vi. [5] Ibid., i. xiii.

always be governed?"[1] "Therefore they are wrong who would deprive slaves of reason, and say that they are only to follow their orders; for slaves want education more than children."[2]

From all which it is evident, to say the least, that the Aristotelian ethics could have added nothing to the comparatively light and loose burdens of slavery as it has always existed in the Oriental world. As healthful inspirations for that age and for all ages, may be added Aristotle's opposition to Platonic communism, and honor to the family relations; his strong tendency to suffrage for all citizens, and to making all men citizens who have a fair measure of character and wisdom; and his liberal view of right governmental forms as variable with the genius and qualities of States.

The dreaded influences of Aristotelianism were summed up in the last and greatest of his followers, the famous Ibn Roshd (Averroës) of Cordova, whose numerous writings, circulated throughout the Oriental world, represented for centuries that sceptical, anti-supernatural, scientific spirit, out of which grew the freedom of the modern Renaissance, after the bitter war against him in Islam and Christianity had proved vain. Against the "renegade" Ghazzâlî, the prime minister of Moslem orthodoxy, Averroës expends his entire strength, answering his work against the philosophers triumphantly in detail.[3] To the theology of personal revelation and divine autocracy nothing could be more destructive than the calm, systematic tone of Averroës, and his clear conclusions, far more decided on these subjects than the writings of his master. He reversed the dogma that good was good because God willed it, as destroying the foundations of morality.

[1] *Politics*, i. xiii. [2] Ibid., i. xiii.

[3] See Renan: *Averroës*, p. 167.

His philosophy of emanation, drawn from Neoplatonism, verged towards pantheism, especially as providing a continuous chain of being between God and man, which it was for man to span, not by asceticism, but by moral discipline and by science. His psychology struck at individual immortality. His exegesis overthrew Scriptural religion in the traditional sense. His free dealing left nothing inviolable by science, philosophy, and free belief; and he affirmed that Nature is moved by principles. His large and encyclopedic thought nevertheless went further towards recognizing the permanent good in traditional beliefs than that of other writers of his school. For example, he allegorized in the interest of adaptation; he claimed to respect the Koran, and to be a good Mussulman. He admitted Fatalism in a certain sense, though not in the full predestinarian sense; recognized the control of conduct by natural laws and their continuity from the whole past, which he was willing to include in the Divine omniscience. He did not even deny the possibility of revelation, yet interpreted it as a part of the education of mind on lower stages, but wholly needless to the philosophic mind, — and he might have added, in the ordinary sense impossible. His political theories were Platonic, and amidst many fantastic ideas contained protests against military despotism in all forms, and in fact against all forms of tyranny, especially that of priests. Above all, he claimed for woman equal breadth of capacity with man in all spheres, and considered the narrow sphere to which she had been confined as the real reason for her actual inferiority, even moral.[1]

Arabic thought has never reached beyond the mind of Averroës. He summed up one of the largest and freest movements of speculative and moral progress in all history. Yet in the very moment of its culmination there

[1] See citations in Renan's *Averroës*, pp. 161, 162.

set in the reaction which indicated that Mussulman theology could not contain, or tolerate it, and live. And the war upon pure rationalism fully organized against it in the twelfth century, no revival has followed. Everywhere the Asharîte and Ghazzâlîte reaction took possession of the powers of Islam, and their watchword was the name of Ghazzâlî's great work, "Destruction to the Philosophers." From Bagdad to Spain raged the fires of Mussulman inquisition. The great physicians, scientists, and metaphysicians, to whom the world owes a debt that can never be cancelled, were exiled, imprisoned, silenced, executed, and their writings destroyed, by barbarians like the Almohades in Spain and the later Abbasides in Iran. They deserve a closer recognition on our part, especially as the most of them were Persians, born and taught in the various provinces of Iran.

Averroës was but the last in that line of Mussulman philosophers whose writings, inspired and directed by the genius of Aristotle and Plato, exerted a profound influence on Persian, and afterwards on Jewish and Christian, thought.[1] We do not speak of such influence on the Arab mind, because such speculations were never suited to its Semitic nature; what the Arabs supplied was the language, which, as the result of the Mussulman conquests, became the current medium of thought in that age. The Aristotelians contributed very largely to this extension of Arabic to the higher uses of language, if they may not even be said to have produced it.[2] They were earnest ethical preachers, men of encyclopedic science, inspired by the intense emphasis laid by *Mahometan tradition on the Will*, either as God or man, to a profound study of its conditions, and upon the basis of human freedom. It is wonderful to note the scope of their inquiries, their aspirations to the highest subjects of speculation and the broadest

[1] Ueberweg: *Hist. of Phil.*, i. 402, 403. Renan: *Averroës*, p. 184. [2] Ibid., p. 174.

fields of application, their conscientious exploration of the wisdom of the past, and transmission of its best fruits to future study, and their laborious lives, distributing original and free methods of thought over the whole East. They were not Greek scholars; they used translations made by Syro-Christians of the Nestorian and Monophysite sects, who contributed the raw materials of Aristotle and Plato, but wholly failed to add any original use of them. For the most part, these Nestorian-Christian translators were in small sympathy with Greek thought, being driven to it as a refuge when their sect was expelled from the Christian Church for heresy as to the Trinity, — seeking in Pagan wisdom the light refused them by the Church of Christ. They had found employment at the courts of the Abbaside caliphs as physicians or literary scribes, fitted to gratify the taste and pride of the Mussulman renaissance. The beginning of translations from Greek into Oriental tongues, however, began far back in the Sassanian times, in earlier outbreaks of Christian intolerance, when Justinian expelled the Greek philosophers of Athens to find hospitality at the Persian court.[1] The schools of Nisibis, Chalcis, and Resaina, and the Monophysite studies, prepared the way for the Greek renaissance.

The accumulation of materials had therefore gone on for several centuries, and had become adequate for the inspiration of scholars like Alfarâbî, Alkindi, Avicenna (Ibn Sînâ), and Averroës (Ibn Roshd); while every successive generation revised and multiplied the versions.[2] These men were not blind worshippers of Aristotle, however profound their admiration for the great master.[3] They analyzed for themselves the ideas of Revelation and Philosophy in the peculiar forms in which Islam pre-

[1] Ueberweg, i. 403.

[2] For these Arabic philosophers, consult their lives in Franck's *Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques*, — "Arabes," p. 83.

[3] See, especially, in Franck, passages from Averroës in praise of him.

sented them.[1] They sought to fill the void in Aristotle's fragmentary psychology between man and God by Platonic emanations, conceived after a scientific method, and by the doctrine of the intelligence of the spheres; and so to complete the unity of the cosmos, not for the mind only, but for the religious sense, — showing in this the natural instinct of the Mussulman for simplicity and unity.[2] They endeavored to explain what he had left vague, and to reconcile the ethical and spiritual with the philosophical side of science. This was especially manifest in their development of the Aristotelian theory of the two intellects, — the passive Reason, conversant with material forms and subject to change and death through them; and the active Reason, superior to the individual and conversant with the Immutable, and so remaining unchanged in itself. This higher Reason man can appropriate and come into conjunction with by patient disciplines, — moral, spiritual, and intellectual.[3] Thus they resisted the Islamic separation of God and the soul, and counteracted Aristotle's notion of a separate prime Mover, the inconsistent point in his principles of evolution. We shall see how naturally this passed over into the pantheism of the Sufis.

Moreover, they refused to accept immortality as a postulate; some of them denied its reality, preferring, as more consistent with their psychological data, the absorption of individual mind into the active Reason, which represented the connecting bond between God and man, and which was likened to the light, without which seeing — the passive reason — was impossible. Alfarâbî, who died A. D. 950, denied this as an old wives' tale, and asserted annihilation.[4] Averroës accepted it, as did also Avicenna.[5] For ethical earnestness, it would be hard to find anything more

[1] Alfarâbî.
[2] Especially Averroës (Franck, p. 749), Avicenna (Franck, p. 734).
[3] Especially Ibn-Bâdja (Franck, p. 744).
[4] Franck, p. 522.
[5] Ibid., pp. 750–752.

impressive than the teaching of Avicenna.[1] For encyclopedic scope, nothing could exceed the works of Alfarâbî, the Transoxanian scholar, of whom it has been said that "what Faust desired to know, Alfarâbî believed himself to have already learned."[2] One thing is sure: the Arab philosophers, whatever their individual views respecting immortality, denied without exception the Christian doctrine of the resurrection,[3] and the curious orthodox Mahometan conception of the renewed life beyond death, as a result, not of actual continuance in any form, but of a new creation by Divine Will, restoring to life a body already reduced to dust.[4] Ghazzâlî's chief reproach of the ethics of the philosophers was that they looked for no reward of virtue but that which comes here on earth in excellence itself.[5]

What made them most obnoxious to the orthodox worshippers of the Kalâm, or Word[6] (Motekallemîn, Asharîtes, and others, scholastic philosophers of Islam), was their incessant intermeddling with the prescriptive Islamic dogma of the fore-ordaining will of God. "The doctrine of the philosophers," says Makrîzî, the historian, "has caused the most fatal evils to religion that can be conceived, not only increasing error, but adding an excessive growth of impiety."[7] They went very far in their criticism of creation by Divine Will. They raised the subtile but valid and effective objection, that creation at a definite time would imply imperfect fulfilment of Divine Will previous to that time, while active manifestation is always essential to perfect being. Maimonides, the greatest of Jewish teachers, as well as of the earlier Motekallemîn, followed in the track of Christian theology, in an excessive zeal to establish against these philosophies the fundamental or root doctrine of a monarchical Deity, — that of crea-

[1] Franck, p. 755. Dukes (*Philos. d. Zehnt. Jarh.*, p. 84) has given an account of his famous treatise on the "origin of things."

[2] Dukes, p. 83.

[3] Renan: *Averroès*, p. 157.

[4] Ibid., p. 158.

[5] Ibid., p. 159.

[6] Ibid., pp. 104, 105; Franck: *Arabes*.

[7] De Sacy, quoted by Franck, p. 84.

tion out of nothing; and to make this easier, this school adopted the expedient of *atoms*, as substances susceptible of being increased by a direct Divine act, at need, and as convenient units for measuring the quality of all objects. Not only did the Aristotelian ferment in Islam bring out in this way philosophical devices and theological refuges in immense variety, but it is hardly possible to find a phase of philosophical opinion which did not come up in some one of those peripatetic schools of the East in the course of their development.

When the orthodoxy of Asharî and Ghazzâlî triumphed, the freer philosophical writings passed over to the Jewish schools, where their thought was preserved,[1] and formed the basis of scholastic philosophy in mediæval Europe, the formative force of Christian dialectics, and the initiation of the great struggle of reason with blind belief. The Jews were the rationalists of the Middle Ages,[2] especially of the latter half of them. Bearers-on of the torch kindled by Arabic and Persian Aristotelians, they bore the brunt of a very natural Christian hostility to the anti-supernatural tendencies of that scientific school. Averroës, their chief philosophical master, was the chief of infidels, and so his name was especially connected with the imaginary book of the "Three Impostors," the bugbear of Christian orthodoxy, held infamous as assaulting the three great positive religions, but which really represented the opening movement of free thought in the thirteenth century in Germany, in which the modern idea of comparative religious science took its origin.[3] It is not, however, our purpose to trace their influence on modern freedom, and, through them, of the Mussulman schools of the eleventh and twelfth centuries,

[1] See their influence on Saadja, and Isak al Israëli, earliest Jewish scientists (Dukes, p. 84). See, for Jewish translation from the Arabic writers, Jost, *Gesch. d. Jud.* 26; also for the influence of the Arab language as the medium of trade on the Jews who visited Bagdad, Jost, ii. 273, and for the stimulus imported by the Arabs, p. 273.

[2] Renan: *Averroës*, p. 183.

[3] Ibid., pp. 280, 292, and pt. ii. chap. i., xiii.-xv.

which were in fact the representatives of the boldest rationalism down to the seventeenth.[1] It is enough to say, that from the thirteenth to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries their impulse within the life of Judaism alone was profoundly felt, and sufficiently to transmit the scientific spirit into the very core and fibre of civilization. But in the fifteenth century set in the natural reaction inevitable for Hebrew monotheism; and the war of rabbinical orthodoxy upon natural law and rationalistic science merely repeated that of the Motekallemîn of Islam on scientific thought. This result, however, was foreshadowed even in the best periods and freest persons of Jewish speculative history.

The first effect of the Arabic revival on Jewish thought was simply stimulative; the Motazelites of Bagdad in the eighth century awakened the Karaite sect to split away from the Talmudic Rabbins; but it was mainly on the question of the supposed necessity of tradition to supplement the written law.[2] In the tenth century we find Saadja busy in reconciling human freedom with Divine predestination, against Karaites and Aristotelians.[3] And even in the persons of its greatest Aristotelian representatives, Judaism did not and could not break from its starting-point in Divine Will, and so not, in the main, from the expression of that Will in a complete and written law. Their conclusions were always in the interest of Scripture and Jahveh. They endeavored to resume the whole past of human thought, and bring its scientific results to illustrate, explain, and justify the doctrines of Creation, Providence, Revelation. Their offence to orthodoxy was that they made Nature and science the ground of these doctrines, instead of a direct and arbitrary supernatural Power. Thus the constructive philosophy of Avicebron[4] sought

[1] See Renan's thorough account of this (*Averroës*).

[2] Jost, ii. 294–301.

[3] Ibid.

[4] A Spanish Jew of the eleventh century; author of the *Fons Vitæ*, a most influential work in forming the minds of the great Christian scholastics. Until the recent researches of

to combine Aristotelian psychology with the doctrines of Platonic emanation and Alexandrian mysticism into one conception of the universe as the unity of a supreme Substance and a supreme Form, of which all special substances and forms were but transient expressions. But even he saved himself from pantheism by introducing, somewhat mechanically, into his system the Jewish conception of a supreme Will, who, as Creator and Mover, mediates between the unity and the diversity, God and the world;[1] a conception which cannot be reconciled with emanation, yet was indispensable to his Jahvistic instinct. Yet with all his endeavors to reconcile the necessary movement of universal laws with a personal Will, this pupil of the Arabic and Greek schools was recognized under every disguise as an enemy of the Bible and its revealed God.[2]

Another great disciple of Averroës, Maimonides,[3] — the encyclopedic master of Jewish learning and thought, and to the present day its most honored secular head, — represented the like conciliatory tendencies, and his freedom received similar treatment, if not in his day, yet as soon as it was understood. In his immortal work, the "Guide of the Lost," it was his purpose to save those whom rationalistic negations and mystic abstractions had left floating without anchorage, by reconciling apparent contradictions in a higher synthesis, — reason with faith, science with religion, the God of the philosopher with the God of the Hebrew believer. This he attempted to do by allegorical and ideal interpretations of the Bible; by naturalistic views of its miracles, and spiritualization of its Jahvistic Will;[4] by combining an Alexandrian dialectic of the Infinite, reaching up into pure impersonality, with full

Munk, identifying him with Ibn Gebirol, a well-known writer of that time in various departments, nothing was known of him, save his great authority and his reputation as a pagan rationalist. Franck: *Dictionary*, pp. 127-131.

[1] Franck: *Études Orient.*, pp. 375, 376.

[2] Ibid., p. 380.

[3] Cordova, twelfth century.

[4] Franck: *Études Orientales*, p. 329.

acceptance of a personal Providence and a self-conscious creative God.[1] He takes up into his broad current the manifold streams that descended through his Arabian and Persian masters; and all the wealth of learning and practical wisdom inherited by his century is laid by him at the feet of Jewish monotheism. Of course the prodigious task was in many respects a failure; in others, it asserted a philosophical science far beyond anything of which Jewish monarchism was capable. But there is something sublime in the loyalty of the ill-sustained scholar to his idea, through every discouragement and distraction, through exile and disappointment and the wild caprices of despotic power, which makes him a noble type of the heroic endurance and faith of his race. The freedom and sense with which he develops the elements of Aristotelian and Hebrew ethics into far clearer and more humane principles of practical conduct than either of his earlier masters,[2] is equally remarkable. He teaches that sacrifices, especially of animals, are idolatry, and only permitted as a transition to higher methods of worship. He defines prophecy itself by natural laws, and as a genius for self-sacrifice and truth.[3] He dissipates the theological superstitions that grew from a physical theory of the future life, and does not dogmatize upon the resurrection of the body, or those details that made the immortality of the soul a reality to his people.[4]

Maimonides is, in fact, the extreme point in pure science to which the purely Hebrew conception of Jahveh and his revealed Will has ever been stretched. He turns the searching probe of natural light upon the literature and faith of his people, to bring order and form and reconciliation into its vast and formless mass of mingled wisdom

[1] Franck: *Études Orientales*, p. 349. Renan: *Averroës*, p. 179.
[2] Franck: *Études Orientales*, pp. 335–337.
[3] Ibid., p. 356.
[4] See Geiger: *Gesch. d. Jud.*, iii. 3.

and superstition, of Scripture tradition and reason. In many respects, though not in consistency or in pure concentration upon ideas, he is a true predecessor of Spinoza, following in large degree the same ideal guidance of unity and deity which personal monotheism alone, as a crude preliminary, rendered possible, but to which it also sought in both cases to set limits, thus revealing its own logical imperfections. Monotheism was more or less successful in imposing upon Maimonides these bounds; and its autocratic element waged as bitter a war upon the naturalism which it detected as penetrating his whole system, as was that which afterwards drove Spinoza from the synagogue with the ravings of barbarian hate. His authority, at first carrying all before it,[1] by reason of his conciliatory attitude towards the Jewish scriptures and the substance of their theology, soon struck against their supernaturalism and the pride of Hebrew religious monopoly;[2] and the strife divided the Jewish world. The works of the great freethinker were burned by the joint intolerance of Christian monks and Jewish rabbins in France, though with the effect of rousing a reaction by the more liberal schools, which went nearly to similar excesses; and when the combatants rested, though Maimonides had not been suppressed, the great dogmas of Creation, Bible revelation, and miracle, — all that was logically deducible from the rights of Jahvistic Will, that indispensable centre of Judaism, — remained in substantial possession of the field. Only by the progress of secular thought has the greatness of Maimonides been fully recognized; and Judaism has found its chief glory in this its noblest mediator with scientific freedom and natural religion.[3]

Even the mystical Cabala, originating in the twelfth century in the longing of the more emotional class of

[1] Jost, iii. 23–25.

[2] See, especially, the language of Juda Alfachar, Geiger, iii. 47.

[3] Geiger, iii. 48.

minds to escape the cold processes of the philosophers, and to follow the imagination through ascending spheres into the vast abyss of pure impersonal being, without will, desire, or action, — using for that purpose all Biblical, Talmudic, and rationalistic writings, — never threw off the main doctrines that flow from the personality of the Hebrew God, but invested it with the mystery of numbers and names, permutations of letters, and divisions of being; so that indirectly and in successive impulses it produces every effect possibly falling within the sphere of perfect Will, through not one intelligence, but ten *Sephîrôth*, until in its later form we find it in the hands of Pico della Mirandola in the sixteenth century, claimed as a great organon of Christian faith, and proving the Trinity, the Incarnation, the divinity of Christ, the Atonement, and the whole creed of the orthodox fathers.[1]

From the later forms of Græco-Semitic philosophy, we turn back to an earlier phenomenon of equal interest in illustrating the warfare of theological monarchism against scientific freedom. After the sharp Motazelite controversies on predestination, the eternity of the Koran, and the Divine attributes, came a more constructive protest, eclectic, interpretative, devotional, humane. In the tenth century the "Brothers of Purity," a mystico-scientific and eclectic school, arose at that old intellectual centre, Basra on the Euphrates, the gymnasium of Greek and Buddhist and Hindu, where the Motazelites had originated, in the school of Hasan, at the close of the first century of the Hegira, two hundred years before. It was the fruit of an intermixture of Aristotelian with free Mussulman and perhaps Christian speculation, on the Perso-Aryan basis of independent science. It was two centuries earlier than Averroës, and probably owed less to the disciples of Aristotle than it lent them. The Moslem regards it as wholly

[1] See Ginsburg: *The Kabbalah*, p. 124.]

extra-Islam. As Sprenger well suggests, it is hardly proper to call it Arabian,[1] — the leading writers to whom it appeals being almost all of them of Persian extraction, though of Mussulman training; and its nature being so purely scientific as to lift it out of the sphere of the Arabian mind. The names of its members, with very few exceptions, have perished; as if history was in sympathy with their absolutely disinterested spirit, the true spirit of science. It was one of the noblest efforts in Universal Religion or Free Science ever made in human history. Its practical earnestness and devotion issued in the production of an encyclopædia in fifty-one chapters, "Ikhwân al-Çafâ," an earlier Baconian "De Augmentis Scientiarum," covering all the science known to the time and indicating its needs, under direction of Neoplatonic theology and Aristotelian cosmology. The whole past struggle of orthodoxy with free inquiry was its preparatory school. Its method is the most thoroughly scientific known to the time, wholly independent of the Koran, and often contradictory of it; reaching indeed into regions where only mystical abstractions and theosophic subtleties were attainable. Conciliatory and catholic to the last degree, these writers never shrank from maintaining the rights of reason in every possible branch of human inquiry. In none did they fall back upon a point of departure in the dogmas of Islam. In their own language they were "opposed to no form of science, avoided no book, cherished no partisan prejudice towards any doctrinal system; but embraced in one scheme all without exception, visible and invisible, uniting the whole body of sciences."[2] There is preserved, in the Talmud, one of their sentences: "Whoever with-

[1] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxx. 333, 334.

[2] See Flugel (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xiii. 29), who has fully analyzed this little known but most significant encyclopædia; while a full exposition of its philosophy has been given by Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xv. 577).

holds science from those who are worthy of it, robs them."[1]

They combined the Platonic and Aristotelian methods of tracing all things up to Deity, and evolving all things from Deity, — the deductive and inductive, mystical and scientific.[2] Minutely analyzing every law, process, and form, under four main divisions, — mathematico-philosophical, physical, spiritual, divine, — they led back the cosmos to primal unity (τὸ ἕν), whence emanations descend, according to curious numerical laws, in graded harmony, after the Pythagorean example, but on an original plan. In this evolution the classes of substances increase in numerical complexity of elements up to the number *nine*. In a psychological point of view, from the absolute Being, the primal ground of things, flows Reason; from Reason, the all-penetrating and all-moving Soul of things; from this, the abstract material of forms, not, as with the Gnostics or Platonists, matter as negation and evil, but as the lowest emanation, — so far a pretty consistent Pantheism, fertile in subsequent special schools of this nature. Their ingenious and fantastic system of cosmology was at least so far reasonable as to rest on the perfection of the orbed or rounded form. Their idea of an inner substance for mind and matter saved their science from becoming, as modern science is becoming, a mere watching and scoring of flowing phenomenal details.[3] The emotional Arab found this speculative penetration and exaltation apart from the purpose of life, and, however stimulating, thoroughly tiresome and unproductive. "They weave a thin robe," he said; "hover over but do not grasp things, reach out after the impossible."[4] Such were

[1] Dukes: *Philos. d. Zehnt. Jahrh.*, p. 12.

[2] Ueberweg, i. 412. Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxi. 120).

[3] Dieterici gives a passage from *The Theology of Aristotle* to the same effect (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxi. 12).

[4] Flugel (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xiii. 26).

the conceptions of that desert people who, in spite of themselves, were made to prepare the highways of science, and to impart to spheres of thought which they could not understand that ardor and courage which they had brought to bear on conquest and on faith. They did here great injustice to the Brothers, who differed from the other systematizers of their time in making scientific knowledge, with a view to practical helpfulness, the foundation of their work, not mere theosophy or contemplation; and they began with what is nearest, not with the remote and unknown.

The anthropology of the Brothers was based on the Socratic principle of self-study;[1] and then the human world was seen as an inseparable part of the infinite system of Nature. "It would be a shame to pretend knowledge of the true being of things, but to know nothing of our own." Man was a *microcosm;* a fact which they symbolized by a tree, with its boughs, trunk, and roots; by a race, with its tribes, families, and houses; by a law, with its articles, clauses, forms of obedience and faith; by the workshop, with its tools and processes; by a castle, with its chambers, halls, and furniture; by a city, with its manifold life; by a king, with his complicated state.[2] Of evil they perhaps wisely forbore to attempt a philosophic solution; deriving it neither from matter nor from mind, but recognizing its actual partition of animals, souls, and spirits with good; while the body is discerned to be for some a prison, for others a pathway of light. Yet in this world of finiteness, of birth and death, every soul is under severe limits; which, however, do not forbid it to find its way to bliss, especially as aided by prophetic men and by messages from higher spheres. The future has its heaven and hell, and its judgment-day, after seven millennial periods, when the All-Soul shall weigh all conduct in real

[1] Thirty-second Treatise.

[2] Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xv. 607).

and impartial scales.[1] In all this partially traditional belief the main and distinctive point is, that it is conceived as under strict laws of order and development, the theory of which is of the most inclusive character. In their personal and literary sources of knowledge they include philosophers, — especially Greek, — prophets, and religious teachers,[2] writers on natural science, and sacred books. Ibn Rafia, their chief writer, when asked to what school he belonged, replied, "To none."[3] The breadth and geniality of their interest in the relation of the brute to the human world is shown in the beautiful romance of "The Strife of Men and Beasts" as to superior uses, before a judge. This constituted the fifty-first treatise.

But no source is equal to that of the soul itself, when in harmony with that which it seeks. "If one knows not what is godlike, he cannot know God."[4] "The soul withdrawn from sense, and calm, rises into the highest sphere and finds its rich reward."[5] Sentences like these show mystic, perhaps Buddhistic, relations. Others seem taken from the golden verses of Pythagoras. Some of a mystic tendency are ascribed to Aristotle and quoted as his "Theology," — probably a spurious work, yet familiar to Jewish and Persian students;[6] said to have been translated for Alkindi out of Greek by a Christian, one hundred years before the "Brothers of Purity;" the Brothers themselves cherished a profound veneration for Aristotle as penetrating in bodiless form the whole invisible world. In Maimonides in the twelfth century we find the same principles; so that, as Dieterici says, we stand, as it were, at the first morning glow on a great comb of oceanic waves.[7] A pro-

[1] Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xv. 614.)

[2] According to Sprenger, with especial cordiality towards Jesus. *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxx. 332.

[3] Flugel (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xiii. 26).

[4] Dukes, p. 14. This is taken from Aristotle. [5] Ibid., p. 15. [6] Ibid., p. 17.

[7] *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxi. 122.

found conception of the unity and harmony of the universe thus runs through the thought of the ages in a definite series. Out of this came the impulse to Scholasticism; in it is the battle of Nominalism and Realism fought out before it came up in the Christian world;[1] in it is the opening of modern science, — all mediated by the Arabian schools.

That which gives the Brothers the most interest for us, however, is the supreme place which they accorded to the ethical element. Men have diverse powers and limitations, both in their faculties for reaching truth and in their outward means of cultivating what they have; but there was no difference as to the claim of brotherhood among them: one heart and one aim was the motto of the whole movement, while envy and ill-will were absolutely renounced. Moral gifts were esteemed higher than intellectual; and religious insight and trust, strength of soul through the disciplines of sacrifice and mastery of the senses, were highest of all. Faith without works, knowing without doing, were vain. In short, their earnest recognition, amidst the war of sects and creeds, of the demands of thoughtful, intelligent, and right-minded persons for personal sympathy, and their desire to put foundations for clear, free thinking, for trustful, helpful living, under the feet of mankind, is a crown of universal religion, which only waits to be seen by our age, to receive its highest homage.

Of course in such a semi-barbarous epoch, political and social, and in an Oriental monarchy, their movement was more or less esoteric and secret, though by no means wholly so. Probably more for the purpose of strengthening the bonds of friendship and securing practical furtherance than from anything exclusive in their spirit, they pursued the method of propagating the society by branches

[1] Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxi. p. 126).

in every city of the empire which could supply a nucleus of thoughtful persons, wherein scientific and social problems were discussed, and literary work done.[1] At Bagdad especially they were much talked of. Their pledge, as given by Al Mukadassî, was to complete and perfect friendship in the cause of truth; to make the end of their inquiries consist in the purification of their thoughts and lives through philosophy and mutual help.

But with all its tendencies to mystical and even pantheistic science, this great school of Græco-Aryan philosophy remains within the charmed circle of Semitic monotheistic Will. At the root of all the emanations is a personal Creator, whose volition is the ground of the mystic numbers and of the immanent soul.[2] In this they are distinguished from the later Sufis. The all-conscious Will creates all, though unlike all,[3] out of his positive purpose. To meet this demand of absolutist Will, they modified the pantheistic tendencies which we have described. But their pursuit of pure science, with ardent faith in universal law in place of arbitrary will, was sufficient. Their encyclopædia was burned at Bagdad in the twelfth century by order of the caliph Mostanjid.[4] The reaction prepared by Ghazzâlî and Asharî led to the persecution of philosophy in all parts of Islam.

Yet this orthodox revival itself could not escape the powerful influence of the Aryan science, whose full light it could not bear. It shows a stamp of mystical and even pantheistic freedom, which does not belong to Koranic theism, and was necessitated by the goads of science. The "Akhlâk-i-Jalâly," a "compend of the practical philosophy of the Mahometan people,"[5] representing the tra-

[1] Flugel, p. 28.
[2] Dieterici (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xv. 585, 597).
[3] Ibid., xv. 605.
[4] See Mohl: *Vingt-sept Ans d'Études Orient.*, ii. 338.
[5] Published originally at time of taking Constantinople. Translated by W. F. Thompson, Esq., Oriental Fund Series.

ditional opinions of the orthodox schools of Islam, shows everywhere the deepest traces of the influence in question; and not the least by claiming that the very philosophy which had caused the free-thinking Græco-Persian schools to be cast out as heretics was derived from Semitic sources.

> "The gard'ner's beauty is not of himself;
> His hue the rose's, and his form the palm's."

On this account, it pretends that the later Moslem philosophers had withdrawn all respect from the dogmas and books of the pagans.[1] It rises to an exalted praise of contemplation in a truly Platonic spirit, — the worship of perfect truth, beauty, and eternal mystery.[2] This spirit is not only put into the mouth of Aristotle himself, without the slightest reason, but made the ground of a parallel between the Greek free-thinkers and the teachings of the Koran, and even the Sunna.[3] "The greatest fathers of mysticism and investigation" are alike adduced to prove that the supreme intelligence, "called the Mahometan spirit," comprehends in itself all that is, "as the seed contains the branches, leaves, and fruit."[4] Even Ghazzâlî's stringent orthodoxy was far from the bald will-worship of the Koran, and, bitter as he was towards the free-thinkers, was itself so heretical to the Spanish schools that his great work against philosophy was burned with those of his opponents. Both of the great representatives of triumphant orthodoxy are found to have given up the old idea of the eternity of the letters and sounds of Scripture, replacing that idea by a symbolizing and idealizing process, in order to reach the inmost idea of the Koran, as its eternal part, thus practically giving up the historical field.[5] By means of such partial accommodations to the free thought of the Per-

[1] *Akhlâk-i-Jalâly*, p. 139. [2] Ibid. p. 355. [3] Ibid., p. 357.
[4] Ibid., p. 359. [5] See Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen*, p. 249.

sian mind, the orthodox schools won sufficient hold on the popular instincts of Islam to second the acquisition of political and military force in support of their war on free scientific thought. Their theology was the precise spiritual analogue of the political absolutism of the Abbaside caliphate, from which it proved at last inseparable. It is true that for the most part the earlier Abbasides were indifferent in religion, and, being the product of the Persian Shîite against the old Arab party, disposed to favor the philosophic schools. Al Mamûn (A.D. 813 to 833) was a decided free-thinker, most friendly to Greek philosophy, and opposed to orthodox views of the Koran. Under the eye of Al Rashîd, sects of free-thinkers spread through Islam. Nevertheless, none of these princes was an intelligent promoter of broad and scientific thought. They were without exception prone to persecution in some form; yet Al Mamûn said, "If it were known how I delight in pardoning, all who have offended me would come and confess their crimes."[1] The glory that shone around the brows of the legendary caliph, Harûn Al Rashîd, has sadly faded; and he stands the convicted type of a cruel, unprincipled tyrant. History has nothing to show more atrocious than his massacre of the great official family of the Barmecides, to whose virtues his reign is really indebted for all that has made it immortal.[2] Ibn Khaldûn, in his "Prolegomena," defended Al Rashîd, saying that the Barmecides were taking all his power from him. During the reigns of these monarchs the four great orthodox sects were founded and flourishing. Patronage of free thought was really due to their viziers, men for the most part of Persian birth and of remarkable ability.[3] In truth, so

[1] Dozy: *L'Histoire de l'Islamisme*, chap. viii. See also Al Monsater's plea for mercy to the fallen.

[2] See Palmer's *Life of Haroun Al Raschid* (1880); and Wiel: *Gesch. d. Chalifen*, ii. 139; Braun, p. 218.

[3] Dozy: *L'Histoire*, etc.

prodigious was the impulse given to intellectual activity by the commingling of Persian freedom with Islamic zeal and passion, that from the eighth to the tenth century the spectacle it presented in the East was perhaps unexampled in history. Orthodoxy was stung into prodigious efforts for collecting the Mussulman traditions and disseminating the true faith among the multitudes, with the aid of colleges, Ulemas, and public sessions. Ibn Abdallah Mohammed, surnamed from his birthplace Bokhârî, — who spent as much labor in collecting the traditions of the Mahometan faith as Firdûsî spent in gathering the legends of the old Iranian, till they amounted to 600,000, restoring from his memory the text of all compilers, and carefully separating the chaff from the wheat till he had reduced them to 7,275, which he set forth as the genuine body of the oldest truth, the fruit of thirty-two years of toil and of travel over the whole domain of Islam, — found a host of eager hearers wherever he appeared. He had lectured at Bagdad and Basra when a beardless youth to 20,000 scholars, and at a period "when in Christian Europe most people could not write their own names."[1] Everywhere schools and colleges for instruction in the faith were established; poor students were supported, libraries endowed and filled with books. His work on Mahometanism was encyclopedic; covered every possible division of faith, conduct, civil and ecclesiastical law, religious rites, and secular occupations, — the origins, the exegetics, the dogmatics of Islam. Devoutly orthodox as he was, in that age of polemics he did not escape the charge of heresy, and was driven at last out of Bokhara, his native city, to die at Samarkand in the year 256 of the Hegira.[2] It must have been fearfully fascinating for the people to hear from his stores of tradition how the

[1] Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen*, p. 433.

[2] Hammer-Purgstall has an abstract of his works.

believers, passing into the prison of final judgment to learn their need of an intercessor, try all the prophets in vain till they come to Mahomet, who alone has power with the Almighty to save his elect, while the rest must burn forever.

Again, there was comfort in being told, on the same authority, that God would save all who had faith equal to a dinar's weight, or even to a grain of dust; and of his drawing out of hell those whose skins had been scorched, to cool them in the streams of Paradise, so that they bloom like sweet wild plants, and without merit of their own are called the ransomed of the All-Merciful.[1] So similar in all ages and faiths is the capricious theology of a divine monarchical Will. Bokhârî was as much of an enthusiast for orthodox culture and for a faith whose idea was mighty within him from the whole impulse of his age to religious study, as Firdûsî's faith in himself was mighty from the pure Iranian genius of a much more human and heroic Will. These two contemporaries of eastern Iran represent admirably the contending elements of that grand ferment of the free human and the monarchic divine which covered Iran with wonderful intellectual productivity in all classes of the people in that age. A class of lawyers and exegetists then arose whose subtile hair-splitting and casuistry resemble the doings of Hebrew Talmudists and Christian Scholastics, and run down into the writing of volumes on the Prophet's slipper.[2] True, too, is it that the Mongol Turkish literature of Transoxania, of Samarkand, Bokhara, and Merv, was almost exclusively of a theological and scholastic character, while the free south-Persian mind expanded in more secular and scientific fields. The command of the traditional theology over the ignorant multitude, and its natural affinity with the political system

[1] Krehl (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, iv. 1–32).
[2] Kremer, p. 179.

of Islam, gave immense advantage to the orthodox scholars and their supporters, the Ulemas. The consequent sway and swing of blind faith and prescriptive creed produced their usual effect, — a mixture of hypocrisy and devotion. The writings of the best teachers abound in denunciations of the Pharisaical pretences of humility, and of the ostentatious patronage of religion, which corrupted the church of the Prophet, — the falling away of the rulers from that democracy and that self-surrender which rendered the earlier caliphs indistinguishable from the meanest of their subjects.[1] Still, it remains true that the history of the great controversies of which Iran was the theatre down to the twelfth century, prove a productivity and an ardor in the Mussulman mind as wonderful as those in the mind of any other race which has been swayed by a positive religion in the history of mankind. Islam has made good its faith in its own Prophet's maxim, "The ink of the wise is more precious than the blood of the martyrs." It has echoed through centuries his cry for the Koran, "Blessed be God, who hath taught mankind the use of the pen!" It has followed his example in placing men of science second only to prophets. Narrow as its religious creed was, especially during the Mongol period, it could not shut out the Greek scientist or the Persian free-thinker from southern Iran. No religion has ever shown such a multitude of sects; it even serves to make up for the baldness of its own monotheism by an instinctive yearning to include within its unity the thoughts of all thinkers and the faiths of all believers. It has the same drift in later times. Akbar Shâh, Ismaîl, and Nâdir Shâh, all sought to found a universal religion by mingling Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Driven up into the speculative height of theological discussion, three quarters of its immense literature of from twenty to thirty thousand

[1] Kremer, p. 434-437, especially Ghazzâlî.

works[1] were of scholastic import; and its contributions to natural philosophy have, in comparison with what has followed since the revival of science and letters in modern times, a meagre interest. Yet for the positive sciences these Mussulman debaters were far more effective forerunners than their Christian contemporaries;[2] far readier also, and earlier to accept the stimulus of Greek studies of Nature. How it happened that after the twelfth century this ardor for mixed speculation ceased, and Islam's intellectual work seemed to be done, is a question that is not more naturally asked than it is easily answered.

[1] Sprenger (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxii. 2).

[2] The greatest Arabian philosophers wrote encyclopedic works, — Masûdi, Bokhârî, Ghazzâlî; Masûdi, a great and philosophic writer on jurisprudence in the ninth century; Yàcût, prince of geographers, twelfth century (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xviii. 397); Sharastâni, historian of the sects, thirteenth century; Ibn Khaldûn, fourteenth century, most liberal and truly scientific of all the writers of his race, a true historical thinker, who has been called by Mohl the Montesquieu of Islam (Mohl, ii. 629); Ibn Batûta, fourteenth century, traveller, envoy in Europe, Asia, Africa, for twenty-five years; Al Makkârî, author of an excellent history of the Moorish dynasties of Spain, seventeenth century. These are but a few of the most important names. The first academy of science in the Middle Ages was that of the Saracens at Toledo, in Spain (see Hammer-Purgstall: *Literaturgeschichte*, i. lxii). The free university at Cairo, the House of Wisdom, in the eleventh century, anticipated Bacon's ideal with a fact. The "Brothers of Purity" established the most remarkable institution for the cultivation of science previous to modern times. See, for full account of Mussulman literature and progress in outline, Hammer-Purgstall, i. lxi. Never were there more diligent collectors of books than the Mahometan scholars and sultans. (See summary in Hammer-Purgstall, i, lxxi, and lxxii.) The library of Al Wâkidî, ninth century, required one hundred and twenty camels, with six hundred chests, to carry it from Bagdad to beyond the Tigris (Purgstall, i. lxvi). Purgstall's immense plan for the history of Mahometan science is little known to scholars. It was to be preceded by twelve quarto volumes of the literature of the Arabs, biographical and selective, with translations into German blank verse. Unfortunately it was not begun till his seventy-sixth year. This great series was printed for seven years at the rate of one volume a year, ending only with his death (Mohl: *Vingt-sept Ans*, etc.). He enumerates five thousand two hundred and eighteen writers down to the eleventh century (Ibid., 139), before western Europe had accomplished anything approximately equivalent to their work. The Saracens taught the pendulum as a measure of time, and a crude form of the telegraph also; introduced the manufacture of silk and of cotton into Spain, camels and carrier-pigeons into Sicily, the art of enamelling steel, national police, taxation and public libraries, paper and gunpowder; and everywhere laid the foundation of popular education in schools, academies, and colleges (Crichton: *Arabia*, xiii). They taught agriculture as a Koranic duty.

Two of the marvels of literature inspired by universality of sympathy were the Ayîn Akbery, or Institutes of Akbar, and the Dabistân, written half a century afterwards by Mohsin-Fânî to follow up its noble conception, and whose wide demonstration of the religions of the world stands under the immortal maxims, "The leaves of God's book are the religious persuasions," and "The time of a prophet is a universal time, and hath neither before nor after, as the Lord had neither morn nor eve" (chap. xii.).

The first reason was the triumph of orthodoxy over free thought, in the twelfth century, which we have already seen to have been involved in the cardinal principle of Mussulman theology, — the ultimate sovereignty of pure Will. To that sovereignty morality, reason, law, inquiry, were all subordinate; and it finally subjugated them all, and there has been no revival. Islam has had no priestly hierarchy to silence thought, so that there has always been a comparative license in teaching, which the natural scepticism of the Arab, the subtile intellect of the Persian, and the practical secularism of the Greek have kept alive, till they leavened with doubt or indifference, or stimulated to incessant self-assertion, the numerous commingled races of Iran. Doubtless this disintegrating work would have gone on towards a successful demand for unity on the large ground of positive studies, but for the constant repressive force of a supernaturalistic theology of Will, — especially with the Mongol races when they swept over Iran, — which diverted the thinker into the line of dogmatic subtleties, just as the same thing had been done by Christianity, centuries before, from similar causes, and by Judaism in Rabbinical days.

The second reason was the despotic politics of Islam, which were moulded on the theology of Islam, and insensibly became its practical servant or instrument. Kerâmat Alî, in a letter to Sprenger, wrote: "The scholars of Islam have followed the rod of despots, and spent all their time in developing new subtleties."[1] Thinkers who must exhaust themselves on abstractions, and cannot put their thought into institutions on the solid earth, cannot accomplish progress. The confusion of the theological with the political law was the great obstacle to reform, and continues

[1] See the formularies of caliphs prescribing the absolute submission of them to their officials, and giving the authority of a Christian Nestorian bishop. Kremer (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxxii. 18).

to be so; the power of the Ulemas to resist it has always supported itself on the authority of the State, and wrought by influencing and governing it. In Iran, despotic Mahometan opposition to this embodiment of thought in action, this nerve-energy that flashes from brain to hand, was so contrary to the whole stress of intellectual organization, that it demoralized the whole national mind, and for a time, at least, reduced its fires to smouldering ashes.

To understand the relations of Mussulman royalty to religious and intellectual freedom, we must note the influence of the conquest of Persia on the Arab mind. When the invaders took the capital city of Khosrû, they did not know the value of the booty. Some offered to exchange gold for silver, and others mistook camphor for sulphur. They came like swarms of half-starved locusts to devour the land. They were banditti of the desert, with no culture but the inspiration of the clan, and the thirst for individual glory and reward. Their conquests were of the nature of an emigration of clans. The only idea of government in these tribes was the leadership of age and valor, as represented in the sheikh, with a natural mixture of hereditary respect. On the death of Mahomet they broke into rebellion.[1] Islam really came on the world like a fierce descent of desert clans on their foes. Khâled was a thunderbolt of destruction upon it; yet he it was that made Islam conqueror, and saved it from disintegrating. Mahomet's ideal of government was just to send his governors through Arabia to establish Islam, and then to collect tributes from the poor, in camels and sheep, also as plunder to meet the expenses of his campaign.[2] Wrought to fanatical passion by the feeling that the eye of Allah was on every one of his chosen warriors, and that "Paradise was under the shadow of swords," they were ill suited to reconstruct and administer the affairs of

[1] Ockley: *History of the Saracens*, p. 215.

[2] Kremer, p. 313.

a grand and ancient empire, for hundreds of years the centre of Eastern religions and the field of innumerable sects, where two forces were at least greater than the traditional absolutism of rulers, — namely, the pride of local freedom and the license of individual thought.[1] Neither intellectually nor politically was Islam capable of gaining the respect of an empire which domestic disunity alone[2] had forced to submit to Bedouin hordes permanently settling on lands mastered by nomadic raids. Yet such was the need of unity, — so hopeless were the divisions of Zendik free-thinkers and Avestan scripturalists, of Manichæans and Mazdakites, of Christians, Magi, and Jews; so bottomless the gulf of sceptical, abstract, and unchartered speculations which had opened under the feet of thinkers; so balked had been the longings of really free spirits to found schools of universal religion on an ethical and spiritual basis, — that all Iran was disposed to welcome the new dispensation, whose first decrees invited free thought and promised a form of impartial unity, in a spirit that, so far at least as the believers themselves were concerned, had many elements of democratic equality.[3] The earliest caliphs were men of great power, and on the whole of extraordinary integrity, as well as determined will. The firm hand of Abû Bekr repressed revolt; the supreme wisdom and valor of Omar, the constructive spirit of Othmân, ennobled mere barbarian conquest into empire; the terrible sword of Khâled at the siege of Damascus had its antidote on the spot, in the merciful heart of Abû Obeydah. Like the Prophet, the first caliphs went in humblest attire like religious devotees, and lived like the poorest of their subjects. Abû Bekr took his part of the public revenue with the rest; had no civil list; had one slave; chose Omar for his

[1] For political influence of heretical sects, see Kremer, pp. 362–371.
[2] It had no system of administration of its own. Kremer.
[3] See Dozy, pp. 191–195.

virtues, took pains to question the best men respecting him, and then proposed him for confirmation to the people; and died praying for his subjects.[1] These men were of the serious, sad type of Arabic sheikh, earnest fanatics, single-hearted, passionate for personal rule and religious sway. Omar was, as we have said, the Paul of Islam; but for him, it would have perished. He was greater than Mahomet. He founded the unity of the Moslem Church, made Arabic the official language of the empire, while Othmân gave unity to the Scriptural canon by destroying all copies of the Koran but that traced to the Prophet's wife.[2] Alî, — who, partly from political causes, had first the good-will and then the adoration of the Persians, — though accused of crimes unproven, possessed many noble traits. He made the caliphate itself, from which he had been wrongfully excluded, an object of homage by his magnanimity, forbearance, and humanity, in the emergencies that grew out of his misfortunes,[3] and finally, by his martyrdom, raised its despotic claims to a divine right. Even in the beginning the Arab leaders were possessed with a full sense of their claim to be a nation chosen to rule by right of Divine appointment. While their system was almost communistic, at least socialistic, dividing revenue per head among the soldiers, and opening paths to position to the worthiest without distinction of wealth, of course political life reflected this supernatural authority that they claimed. They formed military camps in Irak, lived on the conquered people, and were kept separate from the conquered by Othmân's prohibition of a Moslem from owning land in the country which they came to rule.[4] The aristocratic and democratic Arab was in fact transported into the conquered States as a high privileged caste, under what pur-

[1] Sprenger, i. 409–411.

[2] Hammer-Purgstall: Preface, p. xxxix.

[3] See Crichton, Ockley, etc.

[4] For Othmân's regulations, see Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam*, pp. 326–333.

ported to be a theocratic government, with a successor to the Prophet as the representative of Divine Will. In such a despotism the doctrine of supernatural revelation by a personal Will must inevitably end. This submission, however thoroughly consistent with the Koran, as well as with the character of these Semitic tribes, — who were as exclusive and aristocratic as they were contemptuous towards all human laws, — was nevertheless in full logical accord with the worship of absolute Will and the religious ideal of personal unity. These caliphs were the natural successors of the old Assyrian kings. Of course nothing could be more obnoxious to the Persian tribes and their Turanic intermixture than to be so governed in eastern Iran by successive gods set over them. It was more oppressive than Rome, since there was no protection against extortion by a horde of invading fanatics. From one end of Iran to the other, and especially in the eastern States, the spirit of revolt was constantly alive. At no moment had the caliphate a recognized sway over the whole country. The opposition of Persian and Arab gives its coloring to the whole history of the two great dynasties, and determines their destinies. By keeping down with a strong hand the numerous elements of discord in Arabia, by clearing that country of all manner of unbelievers, who took refuge in the larger liberty of Iran, and by the large overflow of enthusiastic soldiers from the vast depths of the original hive, the earliest caliphs, especially Omar, sought, with partial success, to maintain the strength and purity of the ruling caste in Asia. The demoralized condition of the Sassanian and Byzantine empires did much to advance this purpose. But the civil wars descending from old Arabian feuds of Hâshemites and Omeyyads, of Moâwiyah and the Alîites, were irrepressible. The old rage of the desert clans lived on, the old hate revived, and the wild Arab was Arab still, when all Asia lay at his feet. The caliphs themselves

for the most part shared the passionate, unbridled frenzy which belongs to irresponsible power, and were ill fitted to hold the empire together. Nevertheless, the sceptre of Islam held sway for seven centuries; and the incessant revolutions of sects and provinces and petty principalities, and even States, in East and West, down to this present moment, have failed to destroy its prestige or its power. The reason is that the worship of a supreme personal Will not only amalgamated with the traditions of the various races of Iran, but by its very simplicity and barrenness of dogmatic contents gave room for such play of subordinate systems and creeds as the more positive and formalized theism of Christianity never allowed. It is therefore the typical religion of personal Will, so far as concerns capabilities of comprehensiveness, and inclusive power. This advantage in their central principle the earlier caliphs knew how to make more effective by accepting and appropriating an amount of foreign influence which alone could account for the establishment of an enduring empire by a horde of rude predaceous tribes. Not only were Persians the creators and developers of Moslem theology, the founders of its sects, the teachers of its schools, the collectors and preservers of its traditions,[1] but the whole Arab race underwent a transforming education by Iranian experience and culture, — which is one of the most marvellous instances in history of the continuity and persistence of national forces.

It was an absolute necessity for the founders of the Mussulman empire in the East to adopt, in the main, the financial and administrative experience of their more cultured subjects. These native races were at first remanded to a political and social condition of clientship imitated from desert relations; they became freedmen bound to their patrons by certain feudal ties and very limited rights.[2]

[1] Dozy, pp. 194, 195.

[2] Kremer: *Herrsch. Ideen d. Islam*, p. 348.

The conquered were called red-haired, the masters black-haired. But this attempt to engraft on the splendid empire of the Sassanians an institution based on the tribal laws and customs of the desert was successful only so long as it aided the armies of Omar in obtaining a strong foothold in Iran through a systematic subordination and use of the human material at hand.[1] The necessities of the situation overpowered all appliances of this kind. Arabic names, customs, language, rites, penetrated the empire; but under their external forms appeared the native ideas and methods. Omar adopted the old taxation system of Nûshirvân. The native Dikhâns, who had always held the civil and political management of Iran, retained it till the Turkish invasions.[2]

Omar's prohibition of an Arab's owning land outside of Arabia disappeared very speedily, and with it the possibility of making the Arabs a separate ruling clan, a mere camp of military masters in the land. They became rich, and thence came the hiring of mercenary troops and military colonies, and the fall of the empire. Persians, Jews, and Christians intermarried with their masters, and the pure blood of the desert became a myth. A strong party, which set character above descent, was formed against it, and even filled the ranks of a puritan rebellion. The only permanent effect of clientage was to develop a class of scholars and statesmen of the various races, who by sheer necessity acquired possession of the offices of State and education; and they were to a very great extent Persians. Persians were the leaders and shapers of Islamic culture. The simple Arabs learned of these larger brains and more sensuous imaginations music, architecture, sculpture, politics, philosophy, wine, and fine apparel. Persians were the real founders and teachers of the great academic clubs and schools. The Persians, not the Arabs, gave

[1] Dozy, pp. 348, 349.

[2] Kremer: *Culturgeschichte*, i. 158.

firmness and force to Islam, and from them have issued the most remarkable sects. They were the grand viziers who gave immortality to frivolous and barbarian kings. They were the great free-thinkers, the great physicians, the great travellers, the great historians and jurisprudents, who have given a finer immortality to the faith of the Prophet. These masters in Islam, if you trace them back to their cradles, are natives of Bokhara and Khorassan and Bactria, and from the old native schools of Basra and Nishapur, and Samarkand and Herat, — some of Turkish, but mainly of Persian origin. The great impulse from the Greek schools came largely through the Christian heretics of Nisibis and Edessa. That these statements are not too strong, is plain from the fact that most of the great writers were *freedmen*, as well as from such confessions as that wrung from the caliph Abd al Mâlik, "Alas! freedmen are masters of the free Arab."

Under the force of assimilation the Arab families were transformed into large land-owners, merged in the general population, and ceased to be available by the caliphs for purposes of government or war. Resort was therefore had to military colonies and mercenary troops raised from the numerous petty States of the empire. Endless revolutions, weakness at the centre, general demoralization of the caliphate, introduction of Turkish mercenaries from Mongolia, and finally disintegration and the formation of new dynasties in all parts of the empire, were the natural result. This rapid downfall was aided by the bitter strife between the two court parties, Arab and Persian, in which the former naturally had to yield its prestige to superior power of intrigue, and especially by the larger controversy on the question of legitimacy in the succession, — the Arabs insisting on the old tribal rights of the people to take part in the choice of a representative of the Prophet, the Persians, more successfully, on their traditional principle of heredi-

tary government. The effect of this was not to strengthen the central authority, but to weaken and ultimately destroy it; there being no check left upon incompetency and no right of revolutions against a pernicious line of rulers in the caliphate itself; while in the several provinces, on the other hand, there was no check on the power of a rebellious governor to seize a subordinate throne, and compel or bribe the weak spiritual head at Bagdad to grant him the investiture required. By the time that Europe poured herself out on Asia, in the Crusades, Turkish and Mongol and Berber dynasties had risen to the side of the gorgeous and feeble Abbasides on the Euphrates, each with its rival court, its retinue of statesmen, scholars, poets, its broad schemes of ambition, reaching sometimes, as in Mahmûd of Ghaznî and the western Almoravides, at the subjugation of all neighboring States.

Iran, meanwhile, had become the theatre of anarchical wars and dynastic revolutions, of devastation and predatory raids. Heavy taxes for the support of petty courts, heavy duties on travel and trade, drove multitudes into exile or open plunder. To these influences were added dreadful pestilences, of which forty were enumerated as falling within four hundred years, due largely to wars. Never probably did a race possess so little capacity for orderly, constructive government as the Semitic Arab. At the touch of the great Mongol invasions his splendid structure, that had arisen by the genius and wealth of Persia upon the great homestead of autocratic empires, — Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, — vanished like a mirage of the desert whence it was born.

But these political incapacities did not weaken the prestige of Islam as a faith or a name. That all-conquering name covered the multitude of races, of sects, of strifes, of sovereignties, all alike, and took no heed of their rise and fall. Nothing so simple, nothing so inclusive, nothing so

susceptible of ever-fresh interpretation was ever known, so long as the mind of man was content to stay within the limits of the worship of personal Will. And this is equivalent to saying, as long as Iran was Iran; and so the Semitic Arab, planted in that cradle of the Will, must expand his petty national prejudices to accept the life and thought of a mighty Aryan empire.

This principle of a central Will amidst all the antagonisms of Persian and Arab, and in the miserable subjection of the spiritual to the temporal arm, essential to that unity of the two which Islam established, was the common ground, the universal appeal, and, so far as its limits allowed, the reconciling power. Here is another witness, in addition to Buddhism, that other religions besides Christianity can adapt themselves, by force of their central principles, to immense varieties of human experience, treating them as waves that rise and sink in mid-ocean; or as days in the march of centuries.

That again and again in his sublime evolution man has laid hold upon supposed transcendent relations with what is above him; that he has surrendered one system only to find and adhere to another, till, its day ended, still another has serenely and irresistibly risen on him like a new dawn, after whatsoever night-shadows lighted by unchanging stars, — is the inexhaustible word of history, of which a new syllable is preparing to-day.

Intolerance towards rival positive religions obviously lay in the very nature and necessity of Islam. Its God, and its God only, had for it an objective reality; and for it alone the subjective limits and conditions of all theological conceptions were supposed to be miraculously set aside. The temporal arm was master of thought in the name of religion; and the Church, leaning on the power of that arm which has increased down to the present day, is fully in the hands of the State. The form of pure personal Will,

under which this unconditioned Being was conceived, made Him precisely analogous to a political and military autocrat.

It was the positive prohibition of idolatry by this Divine Will which created the persecutions of Christians in the first century of the caliphate. For example, Walîd the great unifier of Islam cut down Christian images in Jerusalem, and shut out Christians from worshipping with the Mahometans in the city, but at the same time gave them three churches for themselves. The later Abbaside caliphs destroyed Christian basilicas, or turned them into mosques; and Motawakkil cut in two the consecrated cypress of Zoroaster. Many of the monsters of cruelty, however, who have overrun Persia in later times, — like Tamerlane, Nâdir Shâh, Mahmûd the Afghan, and Agha Mohammed,[1] — were mere barbarian conquerors, who were seeking, not the glory of Islam, but their own. For the cruelties attending the wars of Islam with Christianity in the Middle Ages, neither side can claim superiority in respect to its fanatical madness. Certainly the Crusaders were a set of savages driven on by crazy priests; while some of the Mahometan princes of that period were noble and tolerant, until goaded into rage by the Christian invaders.[2]

The sanguinary outbreaks of cruelty and fanaticism which have made the name of Islam a terror in all ages, are doubtless due in part to the impulse given to brutal passions by a religion of autocratic Will. But we must not mistake the effects of individual and tribal passions, in which religion had little concern, for the fanatical hatred of rival gods; against these gods the confessors of Islam were bound to war. Still, this fanaticism has not prevented an astonishing freedom of mind under its name.[3]

[1] Braun: *Gemälde d. Moham. Welt.*, pp. 246–253.

[2] See Braun, p. 214.

[3] For Mahmûd of Ghaznî's destruction of books, — forty thousand ass-loads of heresy, — see Hammer-Purgstall, i. lxvii. Omar probably did not burn the Alexandrian library. For Yezid's horrible sack of Medina, see Ockley, p. 426.

Of course the sense of such direct personal relations, held firm by a written revelation, while for centuries it was educating races, grew more and more into one form of religious fanaticism whose cruel outbursts are as frequent as they are frightful. This proverbial barbarity of the Moslem is the natural result, not of a specially savage temperament, nor of unbridled passions, but of the direct reference of conduct to an exclusive personal Will. It was true of all Semitic races whose religion was intensely personal, except where, as in later forms of Christianity, the secular forces of commercial, scientific, and œcumenical life have controlled its operation.

Moslem orthodoxy was simply the legitimate evolution of that central principle which we have defined, applied to cosmical, psychological, and all morally and spiritually vital questions; and in all religions, orthodoxy much more justly claims this logical legitimacy than is commonly admitted by those who wish to retain the prestige of the religious name while they follow tracks that properly belong outside of it. For orthodoxy really represents the long experience of ages seeking faithfully to adjust and evolve the primal principles of its founder; and what it calls heresy is wont to show a greater divergence from these primal principles than from its own, whether admitted to do so or not; and herein consists its progress. But as in human character personal will takes by its very freedom a vast variety of shapes equally justified by the conscience, so in Islam, where such will is the highest religious principle, even the Koran and its Ulemas, with the schools of Koranic jurisprudence and government, have never been able to suppress the tendency to admit a vast range of discussion, inquiry, and opinion, more or less inconsistent with its own exclusiveness as a revelation.

No religion, not even Christianity, has equalled Islam in the extent to which it has been stretched and strained by

the push of free-thought from within its name and professed communion. Great princes in every line and land have continually sought to crown their conquests and glory by uniting sects and faiths upon liberal thought. And even where the impulse has pressed through all bounds to a point so far distant as the higher pantheism of the Sufis is from the definite externality of the Koranic Allah,—the name of Islam has seldom been either dropped or refused. Internal persecution has, as we have seen, been not so much in the name of Islam or its Prophet as from personal political, dialectic, or interpretative considerations. The finest thing about this religion is the expansiveness of its name. It is not labelled for any individual, it is not called from Mahomet, as Christianity from Christ; it is *Islâm*, or *Obedience*. Its unity of God is not marred by duality or trinity of persons, each with his own absolute claim; and for this very reason the multiplicity of incarnations, which we have already noted as resulting from the worship of personal Will, can stand side by side under its common name, with equal recognition as portions of Islam, however unorthodox or mutually repugnant. The immeasurable conception of Divine Unity and Universality absorbs these separated will-forms, as stars are lost in the infinity of the common heavens. And as the mystical capabilities of this conception came into play, even the limits natural to the religion of personal sovereignty themselves melted away, and the path opened to a still freer spiritual aspiration. Such is the meaning of Mussulman Sufism; it is traceable to the ideal significance of Unity, naturally evolved to a point beyond that identification of it with definite monotheistic personality which constituted Islam, as it did Christianity and Judaism, a positive religion.

Two elements in the ethnic constitution of Islam made the play of free thought inevitable. The first was the intellectual scepticism and spiritual indifference of the Arab,

noticeable alike in his desert epoch and in his openness to those Persian and Greek influences which undermined the Semitic semi-barbarism of his days of fire and sword. The other was that nervous, subtle individuality and that perceptive keenness which underlie the extreme apparent respect for political legitimacy in the Persian mind. It is easy to see that this combination of qualities, when brought under the motive force of an all-pervading religious law, would produce a great number of independent and tentative minds. It is not strange that every postulate of the faith was probed to its foundations, or reconciled with reason by a scholastic process. Equally natural were the theological subtleties and verbal artifices by which these lawless investigations were made to appear consistent with an authoritative faith. The spirit of compromise in the reconciliation of opposites was never more freely used. The art of manipulating Og's bedstead belongs to every positive religion, though the instrumentalities are not always so convenient as is this singular union of the Arab and Persian.

Other influences of a nature favorable to religious and philosophical freedom proceeded from the ease with which Islam was propagated among a great variety of races, all of whom brought their special gifts and demands to the common sovereignty. Did our space admit, it would be interesting to trace the multifarious achievements of the great Turkish dynasties which arose in eastern Iran, the marvellous life that seemed to spring up in those barbarian hordes of the North at the touch of the old soil of Avestan heroes, of Achæmenide and Sassanian kings, and the seats of an immemorial culture which had never known interruption or decay, — dynasties that associate the discredited name of Turk with such world-famous lines as the Ghaznevide, the Seljûrk, the Kâdjar; dynasties some of which have proved more capable than the Arabs of maintaining

splendid empires, cultivating art and letters, and advancing scientific discovery;[1] dynasties to which, in fact, the Arabs owe much of their historic fame. The range of differing qualities which we are now enumerating must cover the destructive instincts of the Afghan and Mongol conquerors, which at least show what inclusive powers have resided in the name of Islam. In Africa, the Berbers, a native race, supplied unexpected access of free energy, and down to the eleventh century were the source of Mussulman culture on that continent.[2]

Besides the hosts of native Persian scholars, statesmen, moralists, devotees, who were absorbed into the communion of Islam, we must take into our view the external impulse given to it by Zoroastrian traditions, whether of the orthodox or heretical (Zendik) sort, prevailing among the Pârsî fire-worshippers, whom the Arabs superseded, but for a long while did not wholly eradicate. To these we must add the subtle yet unextinguished influence of old eclectic schools of pure heretics, seeking to build a universal faith out of the fragments of floating creeds, such as those of Mani and of Mazdak in the west of Iran, especially in Babylon, and the Vedantic and Buddhist mystics spread widely over the east. From India to Greece, the choicest literature of the Oriental world poured into the courts of the Moslem kings from Ghaznî to Bagdad, from Euphrates to the Himalaya, and were wrought up by poets and scholars, — too many of them paid hirelings and adulators of power, but great numbers, on the other hand, bold unflinching servants of genius, and martyrs in its cause. It was a passionate rivalry in poetic, philosophic, and literary culture, such as can only be explained by the prodigious confluence of tribes and traditions under a com-

[1] Gibbon: *Roman Empire*, li., lvii. Braun: *Gemälde*, etc. Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 482. Malcolm: *History of Persia*.
[2] Hellwald: *Culturgeschichte*, p. 508. Vambéry: *Bokhara*.

mon ideal, — an ideal whose properly illimitable central principle of the unity of God was forever struggling to expand beyond the limits of personal sovereignty which constituted it a positive religion.

We must not conceal the inevitable tendency of all these circumstances — the natural qualities of the conquering and the conquered races, the rapidity and superficiality of the conversion of the Persians, their sense of oppression and wrong, their consciousness of a broader culture subjected to authoritative faith, the intermixture of revolutionary and political aims with all speculative or religious discussion, the temptations and terrors of arbitrary power — to produce a very great amount of intellectual as well as practical dishonesty, and to prepare the way for that unhappy gift of insincerity which is generally ascribed to the modern inhabitants of Iran. Such effects were often aggravated by the very elasticity with which, as we have seen, the name of Islam could be stretched to cover a freedom of thought inconsistent with its principles, requiring continual half-sincerities of adjustment and interpretation. This, in every religion, is the beginning — or it is rather the open track — of degeneracy and decay. It is the negative sign that a new day is dawning for the mind and soul, which should not be restrained from seeking to escape the clouds of yesterday; that the new wine is fermenting, and that those who guard the old bottles succeed in holding it only so far as they can suppress its nobler qualities. In Islam this was done more by political and military power than by the superior consistency of orthodoxy. Yet here also we must not go too far. There was a sense in which what has just been said of the excellence of Islam by reason of the expansive quality of its name is grandly true. Not all the noble thought which its wide reach of possible meaning permitted it to cover beyond the stiffness of definite creeds was unworthily held or compromised. And it is as

creditable to a positive religion to possess a reach of inclusive capacity as it is discreditable to it to maintain its failing prestige by the two-faced worship of a name on the part of confessors who have long outgrown its possible meaning.

The Mongol hordes which swept down upon the emasculated caliphate in the thirteenth century were descended, according to their own myths, from four male and female survivors of a mutual slaughter of tribes, or from a child rescued thence, and suckled by a she-wolf.[1] To the end of their career they tore one another in pieces by domestic feuds. The Mussulman historian says of them that they had all the qualities of beasts, — "heart of lion, patience of dog, caution of crane, cunning of fox, prudence of crow, rapacity of wolf, vigilance of cock, domestic carefulness of fowls, slyness of cat, fury of boar."[2] Their instinct was to devastate the fruits of civilization, the results of history; their only constructive impulse, to rally round a human God and to conquer the world. They were lazy, filthy, intemperate, treacherous, lustful.[3] They cut off heads, piled them in heaps, standing a corpse head downwards for every ten thousand victims.[4] They massacred thousands of men and women at the graves of their Khans.[5] They slew the wife and buried her with her husband, and drank human blood with relish.[6] Of these semi-human monsters the fit insignia were the "Lion and the Cat." Their name was symbolic of the terror they caused. In Persian, Mongol is said to mean "gloomy;" in Mongolian, "haughty" and "terrible." The hoofs of these Centaurs trod the cities of the East — old Bokhara and Balkh, Merv and Bagdad, Damascus and Aleppo — into bloody dust; and Europe trembled at the noise of their coming as at

[1] Kleproth, quoted in Wüttke, i. 225.
[2] Hammer: *Gesch. d. Ilchane*, i. 44 (Wassaf).
[3] Wüttke, i. 248.
[4] Hammer, i. 48.
[5] Wüttke, i. 232. Marco Polo, bk. i. chap. xlvi.
[6] Hammer, i. 44.

the judgment trump. No prayer, nor prestige, nor bribe availed when the terrified caliph of Bagdad offered his treasures to the grandson of Genghis Khan for the safety of his city. Hûlâgû replied, "My help is in my God, not in gold." To Nassir, king of Aleppo, he said: "Woe, woe to all who fight not on our side; for we bring destruction on the earth! God has torn pity and mercy from our hearts."[1] Their theory was that a vanquished enemy could never become the victor's friend, and should be exterminated. Genghis destroyed all his captives before leaving Iran. It is estimated that eighteen millions of lives were destroyed by these hordes in China and Tangut alone.[2]

Yet these bestial human hordes were not by any means destitute of religion. They had got so far as to recognize some Supreme Life at the root, or at the head, of the world; and later science gathers proof of such representatives of a highest from all parts of that immeasurable hive from which they swarmed, — some Sublime One,[3] to whom the worshipped plants, beasts, stars, elements pointed on. Buddhism must already have done something to stir the seeds of reflection. Judaism and Christianity had long been penetrating these wilds in one form or another. The great Khans were not ignorant of what the races and nations believed. They knew enough to count it all equally insignificant beside the instinct of personal sway. The immediate effect of Islam upon the converted descendants of Genghis was not unlike that of the Buddhist and Nestorian missions upon the original fetichistic theism of the steppes; it was simply to expand their natural unimpressibility to spiritual influence into a half-sceptical, half-believing impartiality.[4] This is a constant phenomenon amidst their most barbarous political and military

[1] Hammer, i. 175.
[2] Howorth: *History of the Mongols*, i. 113.
[3] Marco Polo, bk. i. chap. xlviii.
[4] Abûlfeda: *History of the Tartars*, passim.

atrocities. Occasionally, as in Kublai Khan, it rises into a higher sense of rational liberty, preventing the Khan from joining even the Christian communion, while he showed deep respect to all the great positive faiths; and Rubruquis and Sir John Mandeville testify to his clear insight into the narrowness and insincerity of Christian professions and the moral force of his rebuke.[1] But these children of instinct exhibited other hopeful inconsistencies with their nomadic barbarism. The same impartiality in many respects characterized their treatment of the sexes; women having an influence in political and domestic affairs, and also in trade, rare in the East.[2] The wives of the Mongol princes gave away thrones, determined successions, reconciled armies, ruled States, sat on all public occasions beside the throne;[3] and Hammer-Purgstall even ascribes the short duration of the Mongol empire to the constant interference of female relatives in every act of government. These princes were chosen without regard to race or religion; and their Christian wives and mothers have perhaps received even too much credit for the good works of their lords and masters. Of the same nature were the marks of democratic freedom in the election of the Khan. He was to be the absolute lord; yet the chiefs had to be brought together and formally consulted, and signified assent by casting their caps into the air in sign of freedom, and their girdles over their shoulders in sign of submission.[4] So if the Khan had violated the unchangeable laws of the tribes, he was deposed in presence of the governors, and of the wives and nobles and officers generally.[5] The last ceremony was the oath of absolute submission to the one God on earth, and to the one purpose of universal sway he came to fulfil.

[1] Rubruquis, pp. 156–164.

[2] Marco Polo, bk. ii. chap. xlviii.

[3] *Gesch. d. Ilchane*, i. 12, 54; ii. 25, 271 (Wassaf).

[4] Hammer, i. 49, 57.

[5] Ibn Batûta, xiii.

In these customs and institutions we may, I think, easily recognize the causes of that negative form of impartiality in religion which they so curiously resemble. It is a low form of universality, into which the natural aspiration for unity is beaten or flattened out, like gold leaf, in a common level of subjection to one personal Will, beside which all distinctive claims are trivial. Other negative preparations for Persian influence must also be admitted. There were wide-open neutralities involved in the great conflux of races and beliefs which the early Khans had brought to their capitals, — possibilities at least of foothold for the imperishable wisdom of Iran and Cathay. For the very nature of such treasures is to live over changing civilizations, as the sun lives through varying days and months and years. But these preparations were unconscious. There was no constructive or preserving purpose in the overwhelming raids; no idea but to supplant the institutions of ancient States by the edicts of despotic Will. We recall even Mahmûd of Ghaznî's enormous holocaust of books in eastern Iran, and Hûlâgû's annihilation of the libraries of Bagdad, Alamut, and Medina in the West. Ibn Batûta says a line of witnesses proved that in the Tartar wars in Irak twenty-four thousand literary men perished, and only two escaped.[1] After the sack of Bokhara, the same author tells us it nearly disappeared, and he himself could find no one who knew anything of science in this ancient city whose name meant "seat of learning."[2] The horrible massacres perpetrated by Timûr in Aleppo and Damascus, while he was himself discussing theology with doctors of the law, would be perhaps the most barbarous in history,[3] but for the more dreadful ones by Genghis Khan in Merv and Nishapur and Bamian, which were depopulated and turned to deserts.[4] Of fourteen viziers

[1] Ibn Batûta, chap. xiii.
[2] Hutton: *Central Asia*, p. 115.
[3] Howorth, i. 86–90.
[4] Hammer: *Gesch. d. Ilchane*, ii. 343–347.

during the first century of the Mongol invasion, only one died a natural death. Timûr slaughtered one hundred thousand prisoners in the neighborhood of Delhi, in order to get them out of his way.

Such were the "locust swarms" that lighted on Persia from the Altai steppes; but the touch of the soil transformed them into men, and that intellectual and æsthetic culture which had been its immemorial harvest was uninterrupted. It will in part account for this mystery if we recall in the light of recent researches one element in the Mongol and Turkish experience which has been generally overlooked. During the pre-Islamic period and in Central Asia there had gone on a mighty intermingling of tribes throughout that great region beyond the Oxus whence the Mongol invaders came. The Zoroastrian temples had spread from Bactria over Sogdiana and Khahrezm, and the famous temple in Nubehar was the centre of the fire-worship borne by the Barmecides into the courts of the Abbaside caliphs.[1] The Arabic authors point to astronomical and other scientific attainments in these regions, in very remote times, and to inscriptions which excited the profound interest of the Islamic conquerors. Turkish names are as prevalent as Aryan in the oldest records of the Bactrian and neighboring cities. Even the names of Balkh and Bokhara are Turkish. When to these facts we add Buddhist and Christian influences known to have been at work, the former from the third century before, the latter from the fourth century after, the Christian era, we cannot regard the ground as wholly unprepared for the seeds of Iranian and Western civilization. In fact, we know that the Mahometans had to maintain long and serious struggles against the followers of Buddha and Zoroaster in Bokhara; and it seemed necessary to allow the Koran to be read in Persian instead of Arabic, contrary to the most sacred usage.

[1] Vámbéry (*Bokhara*, p. 6), according to Masûdi.

Nothing, for instance, could have been more favorable to the extension of civilization among the Mongols than the century and a half of Samanide rule in Central Asia, especially that portion of the period in which Bokhara, Balkh, Samarkand, and all the great seats of antique culture were under the government of Ismaîl, the chief of the dynasty, whose reign is perhaps the one most deserving of honor in the whole Islamic history of Central Asia. He was a prince of pure Iranian blood, descendant of Sâmân, a fire-worshipper, who became Islamic out of gratitude to a neighboring prince. His dynasty was the last great Iranian rule in ancient Iran, and fertile in the highest civilization. Bokhara became the queen of cities, seat of purest Persian culture, as famous for silk manufactures as for works and men of genius. Ismaîl died at the end of the third century of the Hegira (A.D. 907). His reign saw the establishment of the great theological schools of the Sunna, to which flocked all the religious scholarship of Islam, while all neighboring tribes and kingdoms, north and south, paid eminent respect to this real metropolis of Asiatic culture,[1] whose traditions went back to the fire-temple of Zoroaster. The days of the Turkish and Mongol dynasties were the great days of Iranian poetry and thought. This was not the result of conversion to Islam. Most of these princes were unbelievers; they had neither the culture nor the narrowness of the Moslem; or they were like the great Genghis, — at one moment listening with respect to Mussulman teachers, at another flinging the Koran under his horse's feet. The Seljûrk dynasty had scarcely brought the feeble caliphate under its control, when it began a splendid career. Togrul Beg was a legislator whose work endured. The literary laurels of the Ghaznevides of the East were rivalled in its courts, and their conquests in its campaigns. Who has not heard of

[1] Vámbéry: *Bokhara*, pp. 29, 30, 65–87.

the splendid reign of Alp Arslân, the lover of letters and science, around whose throne stood twelve hundred princes and two hundred thousand soldiers,[1] and whose magnanimity could eclipse the victory which brought a Roman emperor captive to his feet? "You who have seen the story of Alp Arslân exalted to heaven, come to Merv and see it buried in the dust," was his epitaph. But a true central sun of this court was the world-famed vizier, Nizâm-ul-Mulk, a Persian, — the oracle and patron of religion and science, and the defender of justice and humanity for thirty years; [2] whose beneficence, it was said, extended from Jerusalem to Samarkand, so that in that whole vast empire there was no scholar, no student, no devotee, whom his munificent care did not reach.[3] The same rare genius directed the illustrious reign of the next Seljûrk prince, Mâlik, the Charlemagne of Asia, and fell a victim to court intrigues at its close. "The palace of Mâlik," says Gibbon, "resounded with the songs of a hundred poets." The accumulated errors of centuries were set aside by a new astronomical era, the crown of the science of that time. Order and security prevailed throughout Iran; and no less universal was the zeal of all classes in matters intellectual, industrial, and social.

The struggle of old propensities in these Turanic kings with the civilizing power of Iran was illustrated in the last of the Seljûrks, who riding intoxicated at the head of his army, shouting the verses of Firdûsî, was hewn down and slain. Hûlâgû himself,[4] who broke in pieces this wonderful Turkish dynasty with his northern hordes, sent the greatest astronomer, metaphysician, and physician of his time, Nassir-ed-Dîn of Tûs, as his ambassador, and set that scientist, with four others, to construct an observatory at Damascus. When he destroyed the library of the As-

[1] Abûl Ghazî, pt. iii. chaps. xiv. xix.

[2] Gibbon: *Roman Empire*, chap. lvii.

[3] Kremer: *Herrsch. d. Gesch.*, p. 438.

[4] Braun: *Gemälde*, etc., p. 224.

sassins at Alamut, he preserved the Koranic literature, and all works of higher science; only burning up the theology of the sect without mercy. His son and successor Abâkâ, equally famous as a ruler and as a conqueror, who so unlearned his Mongol habits that his armies trod out no grain-field on the march and destroyed no fruit,[1] yet died of his passion for strong drink,[2] owed the glory of his reign to his Persian ministers; one of whom, Alâ-ed-Dîn, poet as well as statesman, after long service, was sent into exile for his inability to gratify the avarice of his master, and for his honorable self-respect.[3] The next of the line was Arghûn, a Buddhist relic-worshipper and semi-Shamanist, following sorcerers to procure long life; who nevertheless knew that his viziers must be men honored in the land and acquainted with its culture, and chose such without regard to race or religion. One of these was Saad, a Persian Jew, hailed by his co-religionists as Messiah, and lauded by the native poets; famous for good works, but a target for court conspiracies, like the rest. In this reign was learned the financial lesson of the terrible results of paper extension, and the return to gold was celebrated by sayings of wisdom which modern experience cannot surpass.[4]

Last comes Ghâzân, signalizing his conversion from peaceful Buddhism or Mongol Deism to Islam by a bloody persecution of all other religions,[5] then converted again into the greatest of the Asiatic Khans, mainly through his minister, Reshîd-ed-Dîn, a Persian Jew of Hamadan, whose name, "the straight path of religion," was fitly given, and partly through his own universal genius,— at once a mechanician and artisan in all kinds, a linguist, patron of all sciences, and centre of all literatures, missions, and correspondence with courts, from India to

[1] Hammer, i. 272.
[2] Ibid., p. 313.
[3] Ibid., 307.
[4] Ibid., pp. 384, 385.
[5] Hammer-Purgstall, ii. 28–30.

Rome, Germany, and France. This is the testimony of the historians of his time.[1] His gold coins were the standard of purity, even in Byzantium.[2] His public works were innumerable; his example stimulated historical studies into their highest bloom. But his great vizier, who had given thirteen sons to his service, and directed the State for a longer period than any other Persian minister, came at last, in a later reign, to share the fate of such greatness, being put to death with extreme cruelty, amidst curses on his head as a Jew.[3] Ghâzân even emulated his ancestor, Genghis, and the great traditional law-giver of Persia, Ardeshîr, and Nûshirvân, by the compilation of a new code of laws from the old native institutes, mingled with Mongol rules and customs, under the influence at least of the more cultivated of his subjects.[4] By this code were punished the false weigher, the bribed judge, the lawyer who took pay from both sides, the tradesman who sold the same goods twice over. "One hour of justice," it announces, "is worth seventy hours of prayer." Order is secured, intemperance punished, towns made responsible for the robbery of travellers; debts outlawed in thirty years; private houses protected against the trains of travelling officials of all sorts, who had freely quartered themselves on the people before. All firmans and all contracts must be registered; a Domesday Book carefully regulates taxation; mail-couriers are everywhere under strict discipline; army-pay is fixed by law; slaves are converted into soldiers, and captive bondsmen paid for their labor. Archives are provided for records, copies whereof are engraved on brass or stone. There are laws against usury, which, being resisted, led to the further threat to abolish existing debts entirely. Redeemers of wild land are exempted from taxation. And a new calen-

1 (*Reschid-ed-din and Wassaf.*) Hammer-Purgstall, ii. 148–160.
2 Ibid., ii. 169.
3 Ibid., ii. 260.
4 Ibid., ii. 155–174.

dar is drawn up by the astronomers, dating from Ghâzân's era of 1302. According to Abûl Ghazî Khan, he was the first of the Mongol princes who accepted Islam, and compiled, through his great scholars, a true and full history of the Mongols for the benefit of posterity; from which work, with others, Abûl Ghazî himself derived the materials for his own most valuable history.[1] All this is creditable to the follower of the great Genghis after the interval of nearly a century. But by this time the Mongols are well absorbed into the native population; and while Persian literature and thought continues at its high-water mark, the energies of the race of Hûlagû are exhausted. The last of the line was himself a poet and patron of poets, yet the weakest of rulers.[2]

The Mongols in Iran remind us of a vast nebulosity, susceptible of being moulded and condensed into transitional systems by the play of forces that long preceded and long outlived them. And this was prefigured in the really great man by whom they were originally set in motion and inspired with unity, and to whom every branch of their tree goes back. Certainly their first barbarous campaigns, and the establishment of their thrones put an end to the intellectual life of Asia, for the moment. The great cities, like Bokhara and Samarkand, though rising again into splendor, became seats of a narrower culture, more casuistical, theological, and mystic, than before. The Mongolians, it is said, in explanation of this, destroyed the Iranian population of the towns, and with them the really persistent and gifted classes, both in practical and mental life.[3] But it was not long before the infusion of more vital blood quickened much that had lain dead, and brought into play what needed only a more favorable soil. In fact, the Iranian population was effeminate, compared

[1] See p. 30 of translation (1730).
[2] Hammer-Purgstall, ii. 270, 311, 312.
[3] Vambéry: *Bokhara*, p. 138.

with these hardy nomads.[1] It is to be remembered that the invasions were for the most part undertaken as military reprisals, or in that spirit of destruction which silenced all higher aims. Genghis was led to invade Iran by the assassination of four hundred spies whom he had sent disguised as merchants to Otrar, by Sultan Mohammed of Khahrezm (1214).[2] His devastation of the older cities was horrible beyond description; but after all he stands in history for much more than a destroyer. Genghis Khan was a legislator. His laws, indeed, though called unchangeable, were suited to concentrate nomadic tribes upon conquests, not to serve as statutes of a fixed empire. Born nearly six hundred years after Mahomet, he was the father of political changes almost as tremendous, and seems to have held himself under commission from a God of gods. At his coronation, according to the tradition, a Shaman of the family of his wife, commonly called But Tangrî, "the Image of God," and believed to have relations with the Divinity, uttered a revelation bidding him change his name from Tamûzin to Genghis (or the Greatest One).[3] The great Mongol historian speaks of him at death as ascending to "Tangrî his Father," after pronouncing such noble sentiments to his wife and sons as these: "Live in unity,—this endures forever; the body is born and dies. The soul of every deed is this: to be fulfilled when it is undertaken. His soul is impregnable who holds firmly to his promise. Shape thyself in some degree according to the wishes of others, that you may live in harmony with many." His life, as given by the same authority, is a strange mixture of magnanimity and treachery, of faithfulness to his wife and his early friends, and violent passions prompting to the murder of his own brothers. The truth of his record is as horrible a page of bloodshed and destruction as history

[1] Vambéry: *Bokhara*, p. 140.
[2] Ibid., p. 117.
[3] Abûl Ghazi, p. 78.

çan show,[1] giving ample ground for the symbolic legend that he was born with a piece of blood-clot in his hand.[2] His laws or prohibitions[3] are against liars, enchanters, thieves, disbelievers in nomadic superstitions, inhospitality, titles, and artificial honors. He allows no precedence but that of merit, freely consorts with his chiefs, and opens his treasury to the whole mass of his followers. His toleration is complete. His armies are disciplined by the great hunts, of immemorial use in Northern Asia. Men are punished for crime with whipping or death; and one of their chief duties is, to be unwashed. Blind obedience to the Khan is the religion of the State, and to point with his finger is to confer an office. All women are at his disposal. The succession is hereditary, though to be ratified by the assembly of chiefs, Kuriltai. Ibn Batûta speaks of a law that this assembly shall have the right to depose the Khan if he violate the unchangeable Code of Genghis.[4] "Be quiet among yourselves, but swoop on the foe like a hungry hawk." Nothing is more emphasized than the need of unity in families, probably because nothing was more constantly violated. Hence the story of his parable to his sons of the bundle of rods, which could be broken only by separating them; and of the two serpents, one with many tails and one head, and the other with one tail and many heads. All religions are equally good and equally subservient to his will; and all, whether Uighur, Confucian, Buddhist, or Nestorian, bent before it. While that strange master of the world was divining with the shoulder-blade of a ram, traders of tribes and priests of all religions were dwelling at his court in Kara-Korum, amidst the art and riches of all nations from Paris to Cathay.[5] Here was a prestige of unity which promised

[1] Hutton: *Central Asia*, chap. iv.
[2] De Mailla.
[3] Hutton. Hammer-Purgstall, i. 22, 23, 36–40.
[4] Ibn Batûta, chap. xiii.
[5] Hutton: *Central Asia*, pp. 93–95.

some enduring hold on the vast empire which remembered the all-embracing sway of Cyrus, of Alexander, of Nûshirvân, of the first successors of the Prophet. The Mongol soon exchanged his free Deism for the sway of Mahomet. Ghâzân was the first to establish Islam again as the religion of Persia, and the Mongol empire, absorbed into the intellectual genius of Persia, was broken in pieces by her spirit of local independence. Here also the conqueror yielded to the conquered, and their "one world, one Khan," in less than a century had melted into fragments before the Sun of Iran. Like children who, when their passionate impulses are satisfied, turn directly to the very opposite extreme of good-nature and good-will, or, we may say, oscillate between destructive and constructive instincts, so the Mongols turned swiftly from their rage to rebuild the deserts they had made.

Ogotai, the son of Genghis, took the great astronomer, geographer, and statesman of China, Yeliu Chutsai, — a Tartar by origin, a Chinese by education, — to reorganize the empire. This great man "stood like a providence between oppressor and oppressed;" taught the rude autocrat the Platonic rule to set fit men to all functions, whether of making porcelain or making laws; and by his medical skill saved countless lives. "We are all travellers here: let us try to live in the memory of men." "We cannot return from the grave: let us lay up our treasures in the people's hearts." In the midst of these horrible days of blood, the great vizier is seen opening the treasures to the poor. He declared that he won his victories by putting each soldier in his proper place and work, and sending dullards to the rear.[1] His troops were really better than those of the old empires they invaded. It was the simple fare, the self-reliance, the content in barest necessities (the bottle of milk, the earthen pot and tent, the horse's blood

[1] Howorth: *History of Mongols*, i. 108.

in drought), that gave them the advantage over luxurious mercenaries. They had Greek fire, could mine, and wore better armor than their foes.[1] Their obstinacy in besieging towns was invincible. In spite of his intense Islamism, Timûr was a great devotee of the code of Genghis, and upheld it against the Mahometan priesthood, and followed Genghis in his military organization of the conquered nations. The civil organization was not less perfect.[2]

Then followed a new wave from the same great chaotic ocean. Genghis reappeared in his more terrible political descendant, Timûr the "Lame," to reconstruct the vanishing unity of the Mongol world, and sway with the same crude forces the sword of destruction and the sovereignty of despotic law. From his throne in Samarkand this Titan of the fourteenth century called into being the greatest empire ever seen in Asia, and seemed to extinguish in his one resistless will the immemorial antagonism of Iran and Turan. Well might the survival of the old native mythology of the land give his infancy the white hair of sovereign age, which had miraculouly marked the birth of the father of heroes, the mighty Zâl. Resembling Genghis in his barbarian instincts, in cruelty, self-indulgence, lust, and absolutely unlimited ambition, he possessed other qualities which grew out of a closer acquaintance than his ancestors had with the wealth and culture of Iran. The legend that he vowed in his childhood, under prescience of greatness, to destroy no human life, points to Buddhistic influence.[3] He had other great instincts of justice and truth, and a munificence past all parallel, doing nothing save on the most prodigious scale, like an incarnate omnipotence. He was a patron of science and poetry, himself fond of the society of the scholars and artists of his day, an author as well as a legislator of no mean order. He is believed to

[1] Howorth, ii. 62. Also Marco Polo. [2] Vámbéry, p. 173.
[3] Markham: *History of Persia*, p. 185.

have improved or altered the game of chess. His works of religious art in Persia and India were magnificent, and his vast system of colonization filled the great cities of eastern Asia, especially Samarkand, with the splendor of all arts and sciences known to the West.[1] Such a spectacle was never seen before or since, — camps of ten thousand tents, gorgeous and sweeping, surrounded by shops, trades, and all the luxuries of the world; of a splendor like that of the "Arabian Nights;" athletics, jousts, elephant-games.[2] Yet he is himself described as plunged in sensual excesses and savage caprices, and his court as a scene of wild wassail, in which the ambassadors of European States were expected to do their part. He was acquainted with several languages, and his Institutes (modelled largely on those of Genghis) were said to have been wise and strong enough to secure such order throughout his dominions that "a child might carry a purse of gold everywhere without fear." The merciless destroyer of cities and generations, the petty tyrant who was said to have governed his thirty-six sons with the whip, was seen in far other capacities also; preserving the mosques, scholars, and hospitals of Bagdad from injury by his troops; discoursing compliments with the poet Hâfiz; building a mosque of forty-eight columns, with ninety trained elephants; administering penalties for crime with perfect impartiality towards rich and poor; and in his Institutes commanding generous treatment of suppliant or fallen foes, and following the best of the old Sassanian rules concerning taxation and improvement of lands.[3]

Every great event was by this son of destruction perpetuated by some magnificent architectural monument, to construct which artists were colonized from Persia, Syria,

[1] See Hutton's full account of his court, from the Spanish ambassadors in the beginning of the sixteenth century. *Central Asia*, chap. vi.

[2] Vambéry, p. 202.

[3] Markham: *History of Persia*, p. 201.

and the furthest West. Splendid, indeed, they were, with arabesques of blue and gold and glazed mosaic tiles reflecting back the sun. This annihilator of cities brought the "weavers of Damascus, the cotton-manufacturers of Aleppo, cloth-workers of Angora, goldsmiths of Turkey and Georgia, — clever artisans of every description, — to make Samarkand the emporium of Asiatic trade." This was certainly less of the nature of destruction than of that redistribution of matter in which progress consists.[1]

Again, Timûr was a Turk, and put down the Mongol to lift up the Turk, — institutions, language, and all; and his Turkish revival was intellectual, especially from a religious and mystical point of view. Scholarship was patronized. Colleges in great numbers still excite the wonder of visitors to Bokhara. In fact, the rude Turk established "the most brilliant empire known to the history of Islam, except that of the Omeyyads in Spain and that of the first Abbasides in Arabistan." Djâmî, master of sciences; Suhailî, translator of Pilpay; Alî Shîr Amîr, defender of Turkish nationality against all traducers, and builder of hundreds of benevolent edifices, and above all the writer of the charming and wonderful picture of Oriental beliefs and record of noble thoughts, the Dabistân, — were some of the personal glories of this reign.

Again the empire of the nomad, reared in a day, disappears from the scene at nightfall, like the tents from which it came. With Timûr's death begin division and disintegration, and the Uzbeg Tartars and Turcomans sweep over the land. But Iran is not dead. Bârber, a child of Genghis's race, but of such higher type as the Mongol could not but win from her traditions, the pupil of the Shâh-Nâmeh as well as the Koran,[2] famous for many noble traits, though of the old race of destroying angels, — begins the great Mogul empire in eastern Iran and northern

[1] Gibbon, chap. lxv.

[2] Hutton, chap. vii.

India; while Ismaîl, descendant of an Imâm or Sufi saint, sets up a native kingdom in Persia, in the name of Alî and the Shîites, and expels the Uzbegs from Khorassan; and with this Soffarian dynasty Persia enters on a new career. In 1600 A.D., if Mainwaring's account of Sir Anthony Sherley's mission to the court of Abbâs the Great is to be relied on, notwithstanding many of the old barbarities of absolute power, the country was still kept in such order by that monarch that "a man could travel through it with only a rod in his hand, without any hurt; and the people were very friendly to strangers," — a contrast to his barbarous treatment of the Turks in Syria and elsewhere.[1] The swift revival of the Ottoman power of Asia, under Mahomet I. and Amurath, after its utter overthrow by Tamerlane, is evidence of the recuperative force of Moslem civilization, if of nothing else.

So emerge the old traditions, the ineradicable forces of the native genius, above the wastes of the Mongol deluge. One of the strongest evidences of this is in the admiration with which, in spite of his barbarities, the life and deeds of the terrible Timûr have been regarded by his Mussulman subjects.

The work, which passes under the name of "Timûr's Life and Institutes," purporting to have been written by himself, is not mentioned by his earliest biographer, Sherîf-ed-Dîn, who wrote at the command of his grandson from journals kept by the great Khan's secretaries. It was found in manuscript in a library in Yemen; and the intense devotion to Islam ascribed in it to the great conqueror points strongly to a late origin. It proves, at all events, the impression left by his career on the Mussulman nations. We should be careful, therefore, not to trust too implicitly the ideal picture it draws of his virtues, though many of his most cruel actions in war are not concealed; and the apparent

[1] *The Three Brothers* (London, 1828), pp. 87, 33-40, 67.

moral contradictions are such as everywhere strike us in Mongol character.

The style greatly resembles that of the old Assyrian kings, except in the stronger emphasis on humanity and justice. His invasions are usually justified on the same ground that such and such a nation "rebelled," — in other words, did not accept his assumption of divine right to rule the world. Against unbelievers, especially Sunnites,[1] he had a general commission in full to ravage and destroy. He held it his duty to invade every oppressed land and every land divided by heresy.[2] It was the cruel oppression of the Uzbeg dynasties towards "the Faithful" that roused him to punish them.[3] He claims to have been stirred to conquest by a holy Mussulman father,[4] who predicts his glory, directs his steps, and with commonplaces of ethics and religion purifies his political measures. The burden of his autobiography is: "I acted according to my word; I regarded the rich as my brethren, the poor as my children.[5] I caused no one to suffer for the guilt of another. Those who had done me injury in battle, when they sued for mercy I received with kindness, and forgot their evil courses, and so treated them that suspicion was plucked out of their hearts. I delivered the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor.[6] Khodaudaud once said to me, 'Forgive thine enemy; but if he then return to enmity, turn him over to the justice of the Almighty.'[7] I associated with the good and learned; chose out the prophet and the teacher, the philosopher and the historian (not poets). I gained their affections, and entreated their prayers and their support.[8] I appointed intelligent reporters in every kingdom to keep me informed of the conduct of the troops and of the people.[9] I gave rewards and wages to deserving

[1] *Institutes*, trans., p. 359.
[2] Ibid., p. 335.
[3] Ibid., p. 31.
[4] Ibid., p. 374.
[5] Ibid., pp. 169, 345.
[6] Ibid., p. 165.
[7] Ibid., p. 327.
[8] Ibid., pp. 167, 325.
[9] Ibid., p. 169.

soldiers in their old age.[1] I gathered merchants and travellers about me.[2] I pardoned all criminals for just offences.[3] Ministers are not to take bribes or speak evil; they shall do good to the man who doeth evil to them, that he may return to friendship.[4] Every one's house should be safe from intrusion by troops; every one have fair trial before punishment,[5] and be protected in his labor." [6]

The extreme minuteness ascribed to his organization, especially of the army, must be founded on historical traditions. His devotion to religion and high morality, whether authentic or not, is certainly intended to be unexceptionable. He draws omens from the Koran for every act of his life; hears voices proclaiming his coming triumph; seeks in all things to know the will of God; [7] weeps in prayer; [8] declares that victory is not in numbers, but from above; [9] that every empire not established in morality and religion shall pass away; [10] that offices in an earthly empire are symbols of those in the kingdom of God.[11] He resolves to be a king through liberality and generosity and tenderness towards those that have separated themselves from him.[12]

Here then is a connection between the conquests of the Mongols and the progress of civilization, which Gibbon, in his brilliant summaries of the external facts, does not seem to have divined. Here, too, is full confirmation of the principle of Universal Religion, — that the apparent overturns of civilization by barbarian hordes at the intervals of ancient history are really steps of construction. The vitality of ideas and culture is so invincible, that their touch transforms the rudest swarms, the fiercest instincts of human nature, into ministers of natural vigor and stimu-

[1] *Institutes*, p. 277. [2] Ibid., p. 215. [3] Ibid., p. 219.
[4] Ibid., pp. 260, 261, 285. [5] Ibid., pp. 347, 349. [6] Ibid., p. 213.
[7] Ibid., pp. 19, 73, 89, 131. [8] Ibid., p. 51. [9] Ibid., p. 7.
[10] Ibid., p. 175. [11] Ibid., p. 201. [12] Ibid., pp. 55, 65.

lants of progress. We cannot do better than quote a striking statement of the facts from Mr. Howorth's excellent "History of the Mongols." Speaking of the results of their conquests, he says: "An afflatus of architectural energy spread over the world almost directly after the Mongol conquests. Poetry and the arts began rapidly to revive. The same thing occurred in Persia under the Ilkhans, the heirs and successors of Hûlâgû, and in southern Russia, at Serai, under the successors of Batû Khan. While in China it would be difficult to point to any epoch of Asiatic history which could rival the vigorous life and rejuvenescence which mark the reign of the great Khubilai Khan. . . . As the Mongols controlled the communications between these various centres, and protected them effectually so long as they remained powerful, eastern and western nations were brought together, and reacted on one another. I have no doubt that the art of printing, the mariner's compass, fire-arms, and a great many details of social life were not discovered in Europe, but imported by means of Mongol influence from the farthest East."[1]

[1] Howorth: *History of the Mongols*, i. xi.

II.

THE SHÂH-NÂMEH; OR, BOOK OF KINGS.

THE SHÂH-NÂMEH; OR, BOOK OF KINGS.

IF we may measure the worth of a national epos by the duration of its elements in the love and faith of the nation, and their reach over the phases of its consciousness, no poem of this nature can be compared with the Shâh-Nâmeh of Firdûsî. The names and legends of its earlier portion belong to the oldest religious mythology of Iran, in its main features outlined two thousand years before this consummate artist wrought their heroic interpretation into epical completeness. And he assures us, with an earnestness to which the highest authority must be conceded upon every ground, that he has faithfully adhered to their spirit in the poetic form which they have assumed under his hand.[1] The people of Iran received this superb national apotheosis by a follower of Islam as the Athenians received the Jove of Phidias or the Pallas of the Acropolis, — as a real reproduction of their religious and political traditions. To the spaces of time covered by its colossal plan the Homeric period is a vanishing point. It reaches from the earliest to the latest hour of Iranian life, from the first mythic kings to the last Sassanide and Tartar and Arab dynasties which succeeded.

From the gardens of Mahmûd of Ghaznî, the poet of the tenth Christian century overlooks this immeasurable caravan of the ages, and summons every dear majestic form, as it passes, to bear witness to the heroic ideal, and

[1] That these legends existed substantially as he gives them, in the fifth century (five hundred years before), is clear from the Armenian historian, Moses of Chorene. That the same is true of earlier ages, is equally certain from the testimony of the *Avesta*. And all we can learn in other ways concerning the beliefs of the obscure periods of Persian history, as well as the voice of the nation itself, confirms the conclusion.

to live anew as a fit constituent of an immortal whole. Far from being, like the Iliad, the fixed picture of an early period transmitted through later social structures, the work of Firdûsî was his own creation out of materials which for a thousand years of national vicissitude had been accumulating without structural relations. For ten centuries of national decay they had lived only in the popular heart; had then been gathered in some rude shape, not now to be discovered, only to be left again without protection for hundreds of years more; finally to be combined with later traditions into one flaming constellation, in which all their ethnical phenomena assume the unity of significance which comes only by the idealism of art.[1]

The Shâh-Nâmeh is none the less a true history of ancient Iran for the impossibility of connecting its earlier heroic sagas with known personages and events. It is the immortal soul of a process whose material form has returned to the dust, and whose details may well be spared in view of the ideal essence so tenderly drawn forth and sacredly guarded by time. The stages of history are of value not as that endless succession of details to which the sensational school would reduce them, but as steps in the evolution of eternal principles, as advancing interpretations of the same all-embracing laws of life recognized successively upon higher and higher planes of human experience. Thus every successive outlook symbolizes a higher in the ascents of spirit, and leads on to it by a necessity which at once resides in the unity of human nature and assures its full expansion. It is the function

[1] The greater part of the Shâh-Nâmeh, derived from the Chodâi-Nâmeh, was wholly unacquainted with actual history. It is thoroughly mythical till it comes down to the Sassanian period, and even there it shows a great paucity of historical material, giving mainly ceremonies and sentences; but as it approaches the later kings of that dynasty, it shows acquaintance with both events and persons. Nöldeke says that no better connected account of this dynasty has been given than the Chodâi-Nâmeh (p. xix). The Turan wars are believed by Oppert to relate to Media as the scene of the epic, and as inhabited by Turanian tribes.

of the ideal in history, of what are fitly called the fine arts, to fix and transmit these interpretations of Nature in their pure essence, by a fine elimination of all perishable and confusing details, for the joy and solace and noble culture of mankind. In this sense the Shâh-Nâmeh of Firdûsî will be found to contain the whole history of the Iranian mind.

The attempts of ingenious scholars[1] to identify its heroes with Median and Scythian kings, as known to us through Herodotus and other Greek writers, or with the great Achæmenidan line, are based on slight resemblances, on arbitrary etymologies, and on features proceeding from general laws in the structure of the national legend. With the exception of the latest personages of the epos, inclusive of Iskander, the theory has no valid application, and is in fact set aside by the obvious derivation of the Shâh-Nâmeh names from those which figure in the old Avesta, and especially in the Vendidâd Sâde; and by the fact that legends not found in the Avesta were certainly based on equally antique traditions of the same cycle. Their connection with the past is ideal. It is explicable only by the special correspondence of the Iranian mind in the order of human progress—as we have endeavored to demonstrate — to the advent of conscious Will, to the entrance of personality among the all-mastering and all-confounding forces, natural and social, which preceded it. Iranian life transformed abstract ideas into persons; turned fatalities into living choice and the dualism of the will; put positive men and women in place of oppressive uniformities of mind or sense. Therefore its psychological history is not a record of saints, like Hindu idealism, nor of mechanical producers, like Chinese positivism; but a tale of heroes, a Shâh-Nâmeh, semi-myth, semi-history, yet altogether human and personal. The epic of Firdûsî is

[1] See Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses.* Malcolm: *History of Persia.*

its climax, its supreme type. It involved the full Iranian process, by which every god and every elemental force in old Aryan mythology became a man. The Shâh-Nâmeh names are sons of wondrous lineage. In the Avesta these names were developments of the older Aryan conception of struggle between the Nature-powers of good and evil, light and darkness. The social and political relations of the Iranian tribes with each other and with neighboring ruder tribes multiplied these figures and raised them into distinct ethical types, represented in family traditions, rhymed histories, natural songs; held together by the national interpretation of the strife of natural forces as a moral and spiritual — that is, a human, not a merely elemental — fact. With the growth of the Zoroastrian cultus, historical persons and events were brought under the more positively religious aspect of Dualism, while the ethical and heroic meanings remained on the whole unchanged. Finally, the glorious nationality of the Sassanidæ, and its tragic struggle with the Arab and the Roman, transfused this religious tradition with the pathos of actual historic life. Thus one dominant consciousness of a profound truth, wrought over and over again into fresh forms of experience, has given soul and shape to the great epic of Persia. The sublime idealization of which Firdûsî was the outcome was the unbroken evolution of twenty centuries.

Long before the Sassanian revival, probably long before the great Achæmenidan days, these antique personalities had been the inspiration and solace of the national heart; and in that social disintegration which lasted through the Seleucide and Parthian dynasties, they were the refuge of the vigorous tribes of eastern Iran, which never came wholly under the power of the invaders. In them these tribes cherished the true Iranian ideal of individual Will, — Titanic forces of personal independence and moral ardor, forever fated to noble strife. It was a splendid task which

their discouraged instinct was pursuing, in a purely ideal sphere, when all support of national unity and promise was apparently withdrawn forever; and it has been their reward to be immortalized in the tribute of that very race and religion that seemed to have swept them into oblivion; for Firdûsî was a Mahometan, like the Ghaznevide monarch who chose him for this sublime function, but the Persian ideals had overswept the poet's soul. A thousand years had passed since these isolated Eastern tribes had passed under Arab and Tartar dynasties. Through all these centuries they had gained the ascendency over their masters to higher cultures; and at last it was for one mighty birth to show all coming ages how they had seized upon these rude Centaurs, inspired them with splendid ideals, and by their own life in death lifted them into an immortal sphere. Such the message of the Shâh-Nâmeh to mankind.

Before proceeding to a fuller statement of what we have called the dominant idea of this epic, some account must be given of its immediate origin.

It is the merit of the Sassanian kings to have brought the national legends together, probably the oldest of them out of eastern Iran, and compiled a kind of prose chronicle, known under the different titles of "Basitan-Nâmeh" (Ancient Book), and "Khodâi-Nâmeh" (Book of Kings or Gods).[1] The real depositaries of these local or tribal traditions were, however, the proprietary chiefs (*Dihkânân*),— a territorial aristocracy who preserved their social pride and influence through all the vicissitudes of the nation down to the latest caliphs. Their title reflects the spirit of the Avesta, for Dihkân has the sense of cultivator as well as chronicler. Firdûsî tells us that it was from this class of persons that he derived the best information, and his references to them are frequent, as of final authority.[2]

[1] Mohl: *Shâh-Nâmeh*, i. x.

[2] Ibid., xlvii.

Among these chiefs we have reported the name of Dânishvâr as compiler of the Basitan-Nâmeh by command of the last Sassanide king (A. D. 652). It would be safe to ascribe a larger share in the collection of such materials to the literary culture of the earlier reign of Nûshirvân in the sixth century. Like all other productions of that period, they were undoubtedly in the Pehlevî tongue; but they must have been translated in great degree out of the Bactrian and other old Persian dialects. Firdûsî may well have used some of these older sources in preparing his versions in the Pârsî, inasmuch as the poet's home was in eastern Iran, and the literary and religious treasures of that portion of the conquered country would be most likely to have escaped the destructive fanaticism of Islam.

It is recorded that Omar was at first inclined to spare the heroic chronicles, whose religion was as free from idolatry as that of the Koran. But his puritanism was so shocked by the myth of the Sîmurgh and the white-haired child nursed in her nest, and perhaps by the fire-cult of the heroes, that he consigned the whole mass of national legends to destruction, as dangerous to the true faith.[1] However this may be, it is certain that here, as in their whole history, the Arab marauders were led by a purpose higher than they knew, and that their desert creed was warmed and expanded by the rich lore of Iran. They became the apt pupils of this ripe culture. We find their historians busy from the first in keeping alive the poetic traditions of their subjects, while naturally doing their best to suppress all remembrance of the glorious Achæmenidan kings. They treated the old mythic wars of Iran and Turan as genuine history, adding only the well-known names and events of recent times. The rulers of eastern

[1] It is believed that the denunciation of insane legends in the *Koran* (xxxi. 6) refers to these myths.

Iran were of Turkish, not Arab, origin.[1] They sprang from braziers and pewterers, slaves and robbers. They hated the caliphate of Bagdad, and were spurred by jealousy of its glory to an interest in literature as well as to the lust of conquest.

The native religion and culture took refuge with those warlike Soffarides, Samanides, Ghaznevides, whose conversion to Islam brought the ardor but not the intolerance of the Arab. Three hundred years after the conquest, Jakûb Ben Leis, a Samanide, or perhaps a king half a century later, has the Basitan-Nâmeh turned from Pehleví into Pârsî, and sets his court-poet Dakîkî to putting it into rhyme; but the poet dies and the work stops. Twenty years later, at the end of the tenth Christian century, the famous Mahmûd of Ghaznî resumes the undertaking, and after immense labors in gathering the materials places them in the hands of one to whose poetic genius, by common consent, they of right belonged. The name of this king of Oriental poets was Abûl Kâsim Mansûr; but he is known everywhere by the title given him by Mahmûd, which has never been disputed, — Firdûsî, the Singer of Paradise.

We must pause a moment to note the splendid vitality of this Iranian imagination as shown in the history of the Shâh-Nâmeh. We see it bringing to its feet the Arab conquerors, and making the very princes of hated Turan its zealous students and apostles. We see it lifting on its wings to the highest sphere of fame the devout worshipper of a Semitic God. The exclusiveness of creed faded before its gospel of heroic humanity. The rude chiefs who were struggling for the prize of the caliphate found themselves obliged to pay court to native genius, and appeal to its resources against the foreign dynasty enthroned at Bagdad in the name of Mahomet himself, their common

[1] Von Schack: *Heldensagen d. Firdûsi*, i. 35.

lord. Every feature of this marvellous epic suggested universality of thought and faith.

Firdûsî was himself a devout Shîite, or follower of Alî, holding firmly to the Persian side of the great schism which divided Islam. Mahmûd, on the other hand, was a Sunnite. This fact may in part explain the misunderstanding which imbittered the poet's relations with his royal patron, and brought the lord of many kingdoms to the loss of a glory that was worth them all. In his whole record Firdûsî stands as the æsthetic ideal of the nation. In all respects he is a genuine Persian. Possessed from childhood with the great idea which his life's work rounded into full expression, he began collecting and versifying the heroic traditions around him with the dawning of his poetic sense. It is recorded of his boyhood, that the decayed condition of a very ancient dike near his home in Khorassan so moved his sorrow for the lot of his native province that he formed the resolution to rebuild it as soon as he could earn the means, and never forgot his vow. By his thirty-sixth year his epic ideal, growing in secret, like a young plant whose organs unfold one by one, had taken distinct form. But though snatches of the work had already attracted attention in Khorassan to what was going on, it was not till considerably advanced in life that Firdûsî was called to take his due place among the lights of the court of Mahmûd, whose interest had been awakened by the pathetic story of Rustem and Isfendiyâr. His own first love had been the tale of Ferîdûn and Zohâk, completest type of the epic warfare of good and evil; and he tells us that upon Mahmûd's birthday he had a vision, in which the whole world seemed in commotion, and a divine voice promised that all sorrow should pass away before this new Ferîdûn, the delight of mankind. In a kind of poetic tournament, Firdûsî so commended himself above all the court bards that it became evident that the long-

desired epic-master had appeared. When the laureate Ansarî, — who was wont, we are told, to have his favorite verses copied in gold letters within arabesque borders, — sitting among his companions in verse, beheld the country dress of the provincial rhymer, he is said to have cried out, "Only poets, good brother, have admission to this society." "I too am a poet," answered Firdûsî, and entered at once on an extempore contest, in which he amazed these literary pontiffs by his familiarity with the national legend and his brilliant improvisation.[1] A beautiful residence in the royal gardens, adorned with noble works of art, was placed at his disposal, with all the literary treasures of the State, and the poet's genius guarded against intrusion as a sacred trust. As the work proceeded, portions were read to Mahmûd from time to time amidst festal dance and song. The delighted monarch promised a piece of gold for every distich, and would have paid it down as it became due, but for Firdûsî's preference to receive the whole at once at the close of his work, and devote it to fulfilling the dream of his youth.

But the king of bards was not exempt from the irony which ever pursues ideal aims. Such exceptional honors could not escape envy, and Mahmûd seems to have been open to intriguing tongues, like all of his class. We are amazed, however, to hear that the poet was even permitted to suffer for lack of food, as well as made to feel his dependence by studied insults. Yet, strange to say, he seems to have been recognized during all this time as the greatest of poets, and the praises of the growing Shâh-Nâmeh were on every tongue. Even in the latest portion of his work, that which celebrates the Sassanian line, he still sounds the trumpet for his royal patron. If there was really any ground in his external relations for the sorrowful tone which pervades his personal episodes, if the admired poet

[1] Von Hammer: *Geschichte d schön. Redek. Persiens*, p 51.

was in fact poor and neglected, it may be that the fault lay in habits of his own, for Mahmûd of Ghaznî was certainly a promoter of the arts. But a more probable key to the mystery may be found in suspicions as to his orthodoxy. The story, however, can hardly be credited, that he fell at Mahmûd's feet and denied the faith which he strenuously asserted in many passages of his poem. Even at the close of his life he reaffirmed the creed of Alî in indignant terms, denouncing as slanderers those who charged him with denying it. It is certain that the king distrusted him, alleging that his native Tûs was noted for its scepticism.[1] He who had brought all the piety of Islam to bear tribute to the hated fire-worshippers, and glorified the legends of unbelievers with the glow of a monotheism believed to be sacred to the Koran alone, who was awakening germs of comparative religion in the quiet ferment of Iranian, Semitic, and Tartar nationalities around him, may well have excited the religious jealousy of a Mahometan prince. Nor would it be strange if interested rivals should have produced a gradual alienation from the genius which could evoke to life all the national enthusiasm for a glorious past.

At all events, the life of the poet henceforth was a tragedy. The death of an idolized son added grief to disappointment.

"Beloved companion of my sorrowing years,
Why hast thou chosen another path than mine?
Is it to greet new friends, thou leavest me?
Wearied of life in youth, thou yieldest me its woes.
Blood dims my eyes; the world of light is his,
But there he will his father's place prepare.
Old age has come, no kindred soul remains;
Yet am I seen by one who for my coming yearns.
Alas! that he has passed, so young, without one brief farewell!"

The discouragements of his position, and a keen sense of solitude and of the lapse of life, explain the frequent

[1] Von Hammer, p. 52.

plaintive ejaculations and meditations which interrupt the heroic current of his song. He constantly recurs to the uncertainty of all tenures and the need of complete submission to the will of God. Thus in the poem of "Kai Khosrû's Return," he suddenly breaks forth: —

"I am poor, forsaken wholly, and my love of song is spent.
The roar of beast and lay of bird are both alike to me.
The cup of threescore years is drained; my thoughts are of the bier.
Ah! that the rose's perfume dies! Alas, the Persian word
Cuts like a sword! May it yet leave me time
To tell one Saga more from the glorious days of old,
To bear my name down when my life is done.
Then shall He save me there above, the Lord of sword and tongue."

At last the great task is done, and the bolt falls, striking the toiler to the earth. Mahmûd, alienated by intriguing courtiers, proves a niggard, and pays but a fraction of the promised reward. The outraged poet flings it away for a glass, burns his latest verses, puts on a dervish's robe, shakes the dust of Ghaznî from his feet, and departs, leaving the bitter satire which cuts off the monarch's share in an inheritance mightier far than the gold-heaps that poured from the broken idol of Somnauth. "If I plunged into the sea of Mahmûd's court and found no pearls, 't was the fault of my star; how could the sea be blamed? But my book was not writ for Mahmûd, 't is for Alî and the Prophet." Say rather for humanity, for immortality, O Poet! Well may the epos of honor, heroism, and love, the high tragedy of Nemesis, dispense with the coffer of a Ghaznevide king. The sense of royal ingratitude was not aggravated by experience of public neglect. As he wandered, like Dante, from court to court, pursued by vindictive demands for his person, he found everywhere sympathy and honor. Better still was the assurance of immortal fame. "I have filled the world with my praise; and when my breath departs, I shall not die."

But the wound was mortal. Returning at last to his early home, the old man heard a child repeat a line of his satire, and the distress it produced in his mind ended only in death. The legend says that the prince of Tûs, probably through fear of Mahmûd, refused to bury the heretic with religious honors; but being warned in a dream, in which he saw Firdûsî crowned in Paradise, he repented and paid the tribute due.[1]

We can hardly do justice to the self-respect of genius, or to the less honorable rage of offended pride, without quoting from the indignant response that thundered against the insults of an ignoble king. Firdûsî ascribes the conduct of Mahmûd to his willingness to lend his ear to malignant slanders, when he should have considered the debt which the poet's great work would lay upon mankind. A Mahmûd may despise it, but let him understand that this is to defy the bolts of heaven: —

" While the world endures, the wise shall love this song,
For all the mighty dead have heard its call to life ;
Nor other claim, O King, could save thy name from death.
Long as the world endures, this shrine shall ne'er decay.
Long have I labored, poor and ill-esteemed,
And thou hast rudely broken faith with me at last.
I made the earth a paradise, and Persia lives again.
Hadst thou not had a miser's heart, my head were crowned with gold.
Had Mahmûd been a prince, my seat were at his side.
O rarely generous king, whose boon 's a glass of beer !
Shall a slave's son learn royalty ? In Eden plant
A bitter root, and though the sweetest streams it drink,
Yet shall the bitterness infect its fruit for aye.
And thou, the charcoal-maker's son, art still black as thy coal.
When I before the great Judge stand, dust on my head, I 'll pray,
O Lord, burn thou his soul in flames, but robe my soul in light ! "

Surely the poet had a streak of the savage in him; and the conscious dignity of his claim finds poor ending in this

[1] Mohl: *Shâh-Nâmeh*, i. xliv.

revengeful mood. Or shall we find in his wrongs such justification of its scorn as the world has accorded to Dante for similar sentence on his foes?

It was his fate to die in the full sense of these wrongs. For when Mahmûd at last came to recognize them, and sent full payment with robes of honor to the sad old sufferer in his native town, the messengers are said to have met his funeral train passing from its gates. His daughter, stung like himself by years of injustice, proudly refused to receive the gift; but a sister, remembering the longings of his childhood, asked that it be expended in accomplishing the object to which he would have devoted it, had it been duly paid. So the ancient dike was restored with the price of his great sacrifice, and a caravansary erected in his name. But a grander bulwark and a sweeter hospice stand forever, of his spiritual building, for the heart of man.

The chronicler of heroes shared the destiny of his great Iranians, — a life-long struggle for ideal achievement, successful therein beyond all dream, but smitten by Ahriman's fiercest blows; a victory won, like Rustem's over Isfendiyâr, under terrible conditions; the destiny of Good to be first the victim of Evil, and to rise to euthanasy through tears and blood.

His persecution served one good purpose which should not be overlooked. It proves him to have been surrounded by powerful enemies, who would have sharply criticised every aberration from the traditions of Iran. That no such criticism has appeared, fully sustains his claim of entire fidelity to them. The Mussulman historian, writing a century after his death, and claiming to have consulted an immense list of authorities, recognizes Firdûsî as his best and fullest source.[1] And so it has been

[1] *Modjmel-al-Tewarikh.* Mohl: *Shâh-Nâmeh,* i. xlvii. Firdûsî's poem was written before the middle of the eleventh century (1020 A. D.). A century earlier, Tabarî had written

ever since. None disputes his claim. His triumph has made good his prophecy, and it lies in the higher planes of thought. The romancers of later times, whose stupendous supernatural fictions turn the charge into a compliment, pronounce his simplicity tame, finding truth not in the imagination, but in unbridled fancy, but none the less confessing his greatness by imitating him when they have need. These romancers, beginning with Nizâmî, open a new school of poetry, which wholly sacrifices historical or traditional connection to dramatic interest, and paints with the gorgeous colors that have given currency to the telling word *persiflage*, which no one would apply to Firdûsî's simple and earnest speech. Still later, Semitic influences cover the great personalities of the epic with Biblical associations, genealogical and other, absurdly incongruous with their strictly Aryan character.

An epic is no mere compilation of narratives, woven into connected and poetic form. It is in literature the complete ideal of a nation, an epoch, a civilization; and its full literary personality, and every characteristic trait and tradition of the period and the people find in such a supreme resultant their natural place and meaning. Of those who regard the Iliad as one connected work, some suppose its central motive to be the personal relation of Achilles to the Greek chiefs; others find its pivotal point in the siege of Troy. But the epic significance of the Iliad turns on no personal life or historical event. That which brought the rhapsodies together, and made them for centuries the inspiration of the Greek mind, and through this endowed the human race to endless time, was their common fitness to embody the Greek ideal, the type of civili-

from the archives of Persia the most careful of histories of Islam, extending like the mythology of the Shâh-Nâmeh from the earliest to the latest times; but he was equally indefinite in making known his authorities with the great epic poet of traditional lore. Tabarî drew from the same sources. Masûdi's *Meadows of Gold* was another historical work of great value, which just preceded Firdûsî (943 A.D.).

zation which imprinted itself on every Greek nature. All the semi-historical or mythic personages which the national genius had created in the image of its own motive forces, and gradually made into real powers, flowed naturally to the hand of the poet, who was himself the fullest expression of that genius, and could bring out their ideal relations on a scale of national experience broad enough to give them room. Thus Achilles' wrath, Ulysses' wanderings, or the Siege of Troy, was but the setting for a crowded picture in which every form was equally a living force of Greek instinct. Hence the dramatic interest of the epos, the variety, sharpness, and consistency of its characters, which are nothing less than products of the continued play of typical ideas and qualities brought to their ideal form, their natural relations to each other and the whole Greek consciousness of existence, by the master genius of the race. The elaboration of these personal types by the ideal life of one race has lifted them into universal relations, the true sphere of the ideal, and made them immortal companions of man in the ages. Nor is the religious element in the old Greek nature less distinct in Homer than is the dramatic. For the epos is, as its name imports, the "word" of a civilization, — its full ideal speech, in which no genuine form of its genius can fail to find voice.

This representative fulness renders it possible to find, as the master-key of every epos, the dominant consciousness, or motive principle, of the civilization which produced it. It is of this supreme element that the epos is the consummate flower. This assures it a universal function, since only a profound human interest, a structural law of being, could control the special development of any race or epoch. In the Homeric epic this all-resolving idea is free individuality, — the buoyant play of intense will and passionate instinct under conditions of a divine Nemesis, representing, however, a national or public rather than a

personal authority, and less in the interest of morality than of loyalty to the Greek ideal of heroism. And this key to Homer is the key to the whole history of Greek civilization. Again, the master-motive of the "Divina Commedia" was that of mediæval Christianity, the idea of a world-judgment on the virtues and sins of men, conceived after the developed theology of ten centuries of Christian teaching, — an apotheosis of those heavens and hells which formed a constant Presence of overwhelming terrors and all-inspiring hopes. It is easy to imagine why this judgment-day of the ages, lifted to the throne of an epos, should have gathered every great personality, good or evil, past or present, into its tremendous symbolic circles. It was the culmination of a religion which had been the soul and the school of thirty generations. Here the free individuality of Homer is supplanted by a terrific machinery which grinds every living being into food for Almighty Wrath or Almighty Good-Will, — a Nemesis, representative not of the moral but of the theological law, and working in human bodies and souls, not according to their inherent relations, but as an autocratic external police for the future life. It is the triumph of prescription, of irresponsible despotism over the insignificance of human endeavor, and moreover charged to the full with those mad rivalries, jealousies, and hates which constituted the life of the Italian republics in Dante's day. Over it soar indeed the poet's moods of infinite tenderness for all that he loved and adored; but the wondrously human loves and hates are alike steeped in the fearful autocracy of a semi-barbarous religion. The soul is not here a hero, as in Homer, but even in its virtues and its joys the veriest slave.

The Shâh-Nâmeh turns on a higher motive than does either the Divina Commedia or the Iliad. It is more profoundly moral than the Greek epic, and more freely human

than the Italian. It represents the tragedy of human destiny and the irony that makes so large an element therein, in so far as these arise from the conflict of good and evil. And this conflict is conceived in a far deeper and more personal sense than as the war of Iran with Turan. The national element, still more the ethnological, is secondary, and enters into most of the narrative only in a remote and insignificant way. But through the whole and every part, — through the vicissitudes of Ferîdûn's career; the martyrdom of Iraj and of Siâvaksh; the heroic woes of Rustem; the contrasted qualities of such feminine ideals as Sudâbe, Rudâbe, Menîshe, and Tahmîne; the shame of Sâm for his half-heathen child and the love of the giant bird who supplies the lack of parental care; the love-adventures of the heroes; the bitter evils of circumstances woven out of blind hopes and malicious plots; the grievous fortunes of noble men in false positions, like Pîrân; the untimely blights that fall from royal selfishness, like that of Gushtâsp, upon loyal and noble hearts; the passionate or subdued laments that close the sweetest human experiences, one after another, with confessions of the impermanence of earthly hopes and joys, yet ever with the grand comfort of simple trust in righteousness of the heroic stamp, — through all this infinite play of human feeling, whereof the wars with Turk and Dîv are but incidents, flows the strain of divine necessity that the good shall suffer for the evil; the stress of limitations and compulsions, which no precautions can fend off and no virtue escape, and only heroic will and pure reconciliation to infinite forces can meet and conquer. And when we add the gathered stores of moral and political philosophy which the Shâh-Nâmeh has heaped around the later kings in place of a legendary lore more suited to remoter times, we may venture to say that no grand principle of self-culture, Stoic or Christian, Aryan or Semitic, old or new, is wanting to this Bible of

the heroic Will, this sublime Valhalla of ideal lives. Never for one moment is there a failure of the grand motive, the serious tenor, the solemn consciousness of life's summons to self-sacrifice and moral loyalty. So through every phase of triumph and defeat, of cruel circumstance and irreparable harm, of tenderness and anguish, we hear the steady peal of retributory laws, so vast in their reach of ideal relation that their every stroke seems to tell upon the whole world, as belonging to them and to them only, — as if for all mankind there could be no other liberty than to obey and trust the law of duty, no other school for heroes, no other mastery of fate.

Nothing is more universal in scope, yet nothing so concentrated, as the personal life. What the inherited woes of Cecrops' line are made to teach so impressively in Greek tragedy is less clear or just as an expression of ethical inviolability than the working of evil thought and conduct within the criminal's soul, bearing fruit after its kind, and upon the innocent circle nearest his life. And this is the characteristic teaching of the Shâh-Nâmeh. The martyrdom of love and faith forever involved in evil-doing is here brought into closest relation with its producing cause; and the effect is heightened by the fearless realism which will not blink the sternest facts of experience. In these heroic ethics the compensatory happiness so commonly made the motive of virtue, the final arrangement of poetic justice held so essential to the modern novel or play, constructed to please an audience at the cost of tragic power, have no place. The stern problems are left, as life is wont to leave them, unsolved, save by faith in unseen values, and the unpledged reserves of help in the spiritual nature. The law of sacrifice is absolute, and its tragedy complete, because the full meaning of the struggle with Ahriman is accepted, while the resolution of evil into good is referred to the forces of character only. Upon a plane

higher than that of outward circumstance of any kind, the passion and despair which have found free utterance must be healed. Such is the uninterrupted movement of this infinitely varied oratorio of moral conflict, in which heroism and religion are one.

So sincere is its realism, that the frequent appeals of the poet to his readers to remember the vanity of all earthly hopes and to grieve over the fickleness of fortune, the admonitions in which his sorrowful legends end, — to seek consolation in God and a life to come, — although in strong contrast with the brave silence of the heroes themselves on these matters of sentiment and faith, do not fall upon us as mere didactic commonplaces. They seem only natural expressions of sympathy, like those of the chorus in the old Greek tragedies. This plaintive Jeremiah at least knows how to respect the robust manliness of his martyrs, and to make their very woes teach disinterested loyalty to the noble and the right.

The heroes of the Shâh-Nâmeh are thoroughly human; they give way to natural emotions, to pride, to anger, to despair, — sometimes to less pardonable passions. They are generally colossal champions of the flesh, as well as unconscious servants of the spirit, or Titanic powers of noble will. They represent the crude social conditions out of which their semi-mythic forms were evolved. All the more shall we admire the glow of moral grandeur that is kindled within them; for all that has been said of the substance of this epic can be fully justified, and its culmination in such ideals as Siâvaksh and Iraj lift us to those spiritual levels to which all ages aspire.

Since a scope so grandly human must cover all human history, the Shâh-Nâmeh opens with the earliest mythic rulers of mankind. It must show even in them the conflict with evil in nature and with blindness and brutality in man. In the Avesta there were cosmic forces, elementary

processes of creation. But the heroic legend wants them as human will, even in those earlier stages when man is scarcely above the level of the lower creation. Gayômard is here a king, happy but for Ahriman, whose son slays the prince Siâmek, but is slain in return by the latter's son Husheng. The avenger has nature on his side; her tigers, wolves, and birds unite with men and peris to punish the common foe. Following up his mission of destroying evil, Husheng aims a stone at a snake, which strikes another stone instead, and fire is struck forth. The Iranian flame-god here springs, as fire does in the Veda from bits of wood, out of the rock hurled against an evil power. Firdûsî sees a mystic connection here. "As the Arabs turned towards a stone in prayer, so our fathers turned to the fire."[1] Really, the substance of both beliefs is the same, — that a higher life than the crude elements resides in Nature and awaits the first bold contact of human motive and will. The next king, Tahmurath, evidently represents the stage of growing self-confidence, in which man begins to be a power over evil. He not only instructs men in weaving, and in taming wild beasts, but is specially gifted in controlling demons, and triumphantly rides Ahriman himself, in shape of a horse, around the world. He forces their secrets from them by stronger force of will, and fails only when he doubts his own power. Firdûsî's moral is ready: "O Heaven! thou liftest a man above the sky, only to cast him down at once under the earth!" But only by such strenuous effort against evil "did man learn wisdom and that greatest of arts, — to write."

For now Society is born; and Jemshîd is its maker, ruler of the world by noble will. With Jemshîd enters a more distinctly moral force, though good and evil are not without moral significance in the lives of those earlier

[1] The black stone which the Arabs kissed in the Kaaba, and faced in prayer, was supposed to have been originally an angel.

kings. For mythology is truer to human nature than that form of the evolutionary theory which conceives the moral sense to have had a definite beginning in man after purely animal and selfish instincts had already become developed. Ideas of good and evil never could have been formed without some relation to the sense of right and wrong. Jemshîd indicates an advanced stage of this sense. He honors all men according to what they have achieved. Of the first three classes into which he divides mankind, even the laborer is no pariah, but a self-respecting worker. "He does not obey any one slavishly; is a free cultivator of the earth without strife. The wise have said, ''T is idleness enslaves those that should be free.'" Only the fourth class are here depreciated, "those who seek profit by trade, with arrogant thirst for gain," — in other words, distributors, or middle-men, as distinguished from producers; a class whose uses for civilized society had not yet been recognized, though it was even then clear to the poet that "their penalty was to be always in care."

As a social organizer, Jemshîd teaches subordination and due regard for position and powers. He, too, makes the Dîvs do his bidding, helping build houses for the suffering classes, teaching medicine and the healing of wounds. He also paid the just price for victories. "Never lived an investigator like Jemshîd; he sailed over seas, and nothing was hid from his sight." But this Iranian Solomon must discover also that will-power has its evil side. In his pride he conceives himself to be omniscient, because under his reign of three hundred years death was not, and the Dîvs did his bidding in bonds. "So everything fell away;" and the anti-Jemshîd appears in Zohâk. The biter, the serpent, the old Vedic cloud-god whom the lightning of Indra slays, is here wickedness incarnated as king. Zohâk, according to the epic, has not this function by inheritance, but by his own will. His father is "a good sheikh of the

desert, humbling himself before God, possessing herds and horses like the Persians." But the son was "bold and careless, proud of his hosts of gold-bridled Arab horses," and easily yielded to the tempter's "promise of knowledge for selfish ends." Firdûsî calls the tempter *Iblîs*, who is the Mahometan Ahriman; and the whole story has a distinctly Semitic coloring. The Persian legend evidently associated Zohâk with some Arabic or Assyrian dynasty of invaders. He begins by slaying his own father; and his passion for flesh causes serpents, the "kiss of Iblîs," to spring from his shoulders, craving constant supplies of human brain for food. Social order, the bonds of Jemshîd, is overturned; and Iran, rent with civil strife, passes over to the destroyer. Jemshîd dies, weary of this fleeting world. But Zohâk's fate is worse. Utter horror of himself, which no devices can remove, compels him to gratify the twofold demon with two chosen human victims a day, one of whom is saved by good men and sent into the wilderness, where these scapegoats of Iran become the Kurdish tribes,—nomads, and knowing not God. But now the terrible dreams of Zohâk are interpreted by his diviners as foreshowing the birth of Ferîdûn the avenger, whose head shall touch the sky, and whose brazen club shall strike down the tyrant in the name of his murdered father, and of the beautiful cow his nurse, another victim, —everything belonging to Ferîdûn being sacred, and the legend mixing up curiously Iranian and Semitic symbols. Zohâk vainly gropes through the land for the predestined child; but, after the type of all Oriental messiahs, he is borne away by his mother into India for safety, and there, in due time, learns his origin and function.

What Destiny has decreed cannot be stayed. The plot of Ferîdûn's brothers against his life fails, and he returns terrible to purify and deliver; captures the city of the wicked king, casts his godless talisman into the dust, slays

his magicians, and sits on the throne of Jemshîd the Good. The tyrant's wives rehearse the tale of his crimes, wanderings, and frightful pains; the people declare for Ferîdûn, who gains a great battle, then binds the demon in Demavend, and nails him to the rock. Strange transformation of the old legend! The punishment of the hero for bringing the fire of civilization to men against the will of Jove has here become a similar punishment of the spirit of evil for depriving men of the blessings of that fire. It is the difference between the Persian and the Greek. In the Zohâk myth, the punishment is in the interest of the moral law: in the Promethean, it is quite otherwise.

"Alas, let us not sin; since neither good nor evil things abide. It is best to leave good deeds for our monument in men's memories. Ferîdûn was not made of musk and amber; he won his glory by justice and love. Be just and generous, and thou shalt be a Ferîdûn, whose glory is to have delivered the world from the hands of the wicked."

A great and happy king, "who bound evil by good, whenever he saw a wrong or a desert place," Ferîdûn at last wishes for repose in old age, and divides his empire equally among his three sons; the youngest and best of whom has the ancient homestead of his race, Iran. Selm and Tûr, enraged at the distribution, conspire to dethrone Iraj and seize his patrimony. In reply to their arrogant demands, Ferîdûn warns them sorrowfully that they will reap as they have sown, and then tenderly commends Iraj to the protection due to his innocence and his right. Iraj, inspired by the purest self-denial, resolves to rise to a still higher plane, and trust wholly to the guidance of his brotherly instincts in face of almost certain death.

"Who, when he thinks on death, so sure to all,
Would plant the tree of hate, with roots in blood,
To bear the fruit of vengeance? Never dwelt

Hate in the kings of old. I will go forth
Unarmed, and yield my throne to them,
My brethren; asking but this recompense,
That I shall turn their cruel hearts to love."

Against his own good sense the old king grants consent, and sends a letter of fatherly counsel by the heroic martyr. And Iraj goes sweetly to his brothers, saying, —

"Will you but cease from hate, the whole is yours;
Let it go freely, if it bars your hearts
From the dear love I dearer hold than power."

But when they see how gladly all the army look on the fair boy and his noble ways, then the devil in them rages, and they kill him and send his head to his father. "O Earth! why didst thou not save him whom thou hadst nursed on thy bosom? And thou, O Man, who cherishest evil thought in thy heart, behold here the fruit it bears!" Then the old king Ferîdûn, looking out anxiously over the desert, beholds the caravan bringing its fatal message and freight, and breaks into loud lament over the pride of his heart, forever lost: —

"O trust not in earthly love! O thou just God,
Send thou the avenger from this sufferer's blood!
Then will I gladly greet the house of death."

And in due time comes the hero Manoshcihr, issue of this woe, heir to this demand for Nemesis. A new Jemshîd rises from the grave, and the war of God against Ahriman bursts upon the heads of Selm and Tûr. The criminals are beheaded, but the young prince, better than his age, does not send their heads to their woful father. His cry to the fleeing Selm is the voice of the eternal law: —

"The tree of thine own planting shakes its fruit
Into thy bosom. Is 't a thorn, thou sowed'st it,
Or robe of silk, the weaver was thyself."

The armies of the culprits are sent home forgiven, crying, —

> "O Pehlevâns! crowned with victory, the earth
> No more shall reek with blood; the star of tyrants fades."

Ferîdûn receives his grandson with thanksgiving "to the Power that renders to each his due, with guardian care." But the world is narrow now, and he longs for freer air. Failing under the burden of this tragedy, which covers all the sympathies of his being, he fades away from life, sorrowing till its span is past.

> "So long ago he died, but left a glorious name,
> Because he learned from suffering to be wise."

Such are the opening scenes of an epic whose movement embraces all history, and in which every shock of individual destiny seems to involve the whole frame of existence. In these scenes we have the key-note to the whole, — the dealing of the moral law with personal character, and the solution of all the mysteries of the life-struggle by loyalty to faith, manliness, love. The hero's sword was here, as it still is, the terrible minister of moral necessities deeper than human will; but love and forgiveness were the highest personal ideal, and it was their martyrdom that he came in to avenge. Equally marked in the very outset is the distinctively natural and human character of the Persian epic. It does not rest, like the Mahâbhârata or Râmâyaṇa, on supernatural interests and aids, aggrandized at man's expense, but is penetrated by the profound sense of human experience, of struggle with circumstances, of the nets of sin and sorrow, of the grandeur of personal Will, the power of man to achieve, even in submitting to the inexorable limits of his existence. In the tale of Ferîdûn and his sons the human motive excludes all others. In other tales, the supernatural, sometimes prominent, is always secondary, and does not disturb the constant emphasis on the moral law.

It is in accordance with this motive that the interest is wont to gather about the closest natural relationship, the

sympathies and obligations that consecrate domestic ties, the filial, fraternal, sexual sanctities. These are the centres of personality. At these roots of character the forces of evil strike most fiercely. In these the blindness of passion, the agony of pain and loss, the coils of misleading destiny, are most destructive. In these are the situations which have always been found most full of tragic motive. In these relations, which Nature brings but once, and whose destruction by folly or crime or fate can never be repaired, poetry has found its supreme types of suffering and devotion. All races and faiths gather about this common hearth, and find in the power of courage and sacrifice to master or transform the bitter wounds of filial, fraternal, and conjugal ties, the height of heroic victory. The law of early races, that the nearest blood-relative should undertake the duty of avenging unnatural crimes, has wide scope in ancient mythology. In family crimes Greek tragedy centred. "The woes of Pelops' line," the dreadful fate that drives Orestes and his sister to follow up domestic crimes by bloody penalties involving agonies of atonement, have made them immortal types of an heroic virtue purchased at immeasurable cost. The Trojan War is the consequence of a broken marriage tie. Conflict between father and son, brought on by some fatal mistake, and ending either in the death of one at the other's hand, or in the infliction of irreparable injury before the dreadful illusion is broken, which comes to its supreme type in the Persian tale of Rustem and Sohrâb, is found at the heart of all great mythologies. Baldur is unintentionally slain by his brother Hödur, whom the evil spirit Loki misleads. The duels of Lancelot and his son Sir Galahad, and that of the brothers Balin and Balan, all noble knights of pure and tender heart, are the most touching episodes of the old British epic. The successions of night and day, the following of dawn by noon, of twilight by night, interpreted as the strife of

parent and offspring, are the key to a large proportion of the Greek myths; and the successive dynasties of the gods in Hesiod are dethronements of a similar nature. The supreme forms of atonement in all religions which rest on anthropomorphic ideas are sacrifices of children by their parents. They proceed not from cruelty so much as from the conviction that no other atonement can so thoroughly express the agony, and so the efficacy, of self-sacrifice as this. We read the terrible commandment of the god to Agamemnon to purchase the safety of the Greeks before Troy by slaying his daughter Iphigenia on the altar; the test of absolute obedience laid on Abraham and Jephthah by their religion; and, what is entirely similar in its origin, the Christian mystery of the Atonement, by which the abstractions of the Trinity become clothed to the popular imagination in all the fervent colors of human martyrdom both for the Father and the Son. No religion, however supernatural in its pretensions, however illusory in its dogmas, dispenses with resting its ideal ultimately on the natural relations of man as supreme; in other words, on the divine significance of the family, not only as the beginning of social progress, but as the undying principle of social existence and the germinal point of personal character. So soon, therefore, as the will began to get free expression, so as to form its own epos, we find that its ideal types of the tragedy of life, of the irony of fortune, and the struggle of human limitations with the mysteries of pain and death have been sought, not in the overwhelming interference of gods, nor in miraculous immunities from finite conditions, but in the intensest play of those relations which are nearest and dearest, most thoroughly human and universal. Of the high possibilities of these relations for tragic situation, for heroic culture, for the march of Nemesis, the Shâh-Nâmeh has much to teach.

This was to be expected from the emphasis of the Iranian

mind on the ideal dualism of existence, the moral and physical antagonisms which reveal it. The Shâh-Nâmeh is probably the most remarkable instance of this tragic emphasis among the great products of the religious imagination. All other cycles of legend which partake of the same spirit are so infinitely complex and discursive, that the strength of this mighty motive seems dissipated in a crowd of details. Scandinavian, British, Hindu, and Christian mythologies interweave such a medley of subordinate interests with every expression of it, that we lose the sense of its sovereignty. It does not stand forth as the very atmosphere of feeling, or the magnetic force that groups the infinite variety of circumstance around its poles, revealing the limits of passion and power, and the sway of cosmical as well as humanly universal law. In this instinct for human limit, this possession by their own central motive, only the Greek poets have surpassed Firdûsî; and they have not taken this special motive as central, upon so vast and difficult a scale. So skilfully does he manage the immense mass of materials, that everything helps to emphasize the personal glory or grief, to accent the tread of Destiny over man's strength and his weakness alike, as it beats up the latent forces of sacrifice and ideal aim from the dreadful soil of anguish and death. No *deus ex machina* finds place here, as the Euripidean god enters the dreadful coil of fate around Orestes and Electra, to settle all difficulties for the writer, and solve things insoluble, by mere fiat. The mercurial Greek's fancy might be satisfied with this; the serious Perso-Mahometan's, never.

Heroism is here the substance of religion, and stands on its own merit. It is itself the ideal, and no god can for one moment dispense with its conditions. It lifts the poet above the bounds of nationality, masters every race prejudice on which the legend might at first seem founded. It recognizes itself in the Turanian hero as well as in the

Iranian; in Pîrân, Afrâsiyâb, Pîlsam. And many Turanian women, who win the love of the Pehlevâns and bear the noblest persons in the epos, become more admirable to us, and awaken deeper sympathy than do the Iranians themselves. The same moral standard suffices for believer and unbeliever. Except in certain passages of the later portion, in which the hand of the Zoroastrian priesthood is apparent, the narrowness of the Avestan stand-point is escaped. The epos honors only Nature and truth.

The line of the great Pehlevâns of Seistan, motherland of Iranian liberties, begins in Sâm [1] and ends in the Persian Achilles, Rustem. Let us see how the legend evolves this colossal type of heroism.

To Sâm a son is born, with every mark of the true Pehlevân, save that his hair is white. This trait would seem, like the similar legend of the Chinese Lao-tse, to intimate a higher wisdom, not derived from the experience of age, and to foreshadow the idea of intuition, — something which the wise in their own generation could not conceive as belonging to a child, but destined to put their finalities to shame. Such is certainly the point of the Persian legend of Zâl. In the terror and shame of having brought some demonic power into the world, Sâm becomes selfish enough to expose his child on the top of Albôrz; more cruel than the lioness, who cares for her whelps, "giving them her blood to drink, not for any reward, but because she cannot live without them." And indeed, when his father forsakes him, Zâl is taken up by the mighty life of Nature, as the hero is in all religious mythology. The infant's cry, in hunger and heat, brings the giant bird, the Sîmurgh, on mighty wings, to his relief; and her pity is approved by the voice from heaven foretelling his great destiny. So the young birds are his brothers, and he has

[1] Identified by Spiegel (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, iii. 251) with Kereçâçpa, of the Aryan myth.

the largest share in their parent's love, — a love and admiration bred in the monsters of the wild when refused by human kin.

Sâm, meanwhile, slowly awakes to the sense of his folly and sin. Impressed by a dream in which his own whitening locks instruct him that his child's hair was not the work of demons, but of God, he sets forth to find his son. As his train labors up the heights of Albôrz, the mighty bird comes soaring from her nest on the summit, a majestic pile of sandal-wood and ivory and woven aloe-branches. In answer to the father's prayer, the Sîmurgh brings Zâl upon her bosom, — a noble youth, innocent of all craft, wise only in Nature's lore, which, like his symbolic hair, supplies that which lengthened years alone are supposed to bring; and his father receives him joyfully, while the Sîmurgh's parting gift is a feather from her own wing, which he was to burn whenever he should need her aid in the command of occult powers.

Next comes a new antagonism of wills, out of which the future shall be born. Zâl's romantic love for Rudâbe, daughter of the unbelieving king of Cabulistan, replete with stolen interviews and vows of devotion, results in a letter written to his father in praise of the maiden, which puts the old Pehlevân to a severer trial than the child's hoary head. What penalty must follow such mingling of the blood of Ferîdûn with that of Zohâk, such union of the true believer with the worshipper of Dîvs! But the Mobads, who seem bound, at least in the heroic legend, to play the part of liberalism, predict that the child of this marriage shall win the world for Iran, bring comfort to the whole land, and conquer all the strife and pain of Turanic wars. It is religion itself that bids him drop his narrow creed and treat Gentiles as his own blood. Again the slave of superstition is liberated through suffering, by the power of love. Sâm writes to the Shâh, hoping to have his

consent to the innovation. Meanwhile Rudâbe's parents must bear their part in the shock of old belief. Dreading the anger of the Shâh, and expecting his kingdom to be laid waste, the father is tempted to slay both his daughter and his wife; but the latter's higher faith restrains him, with the saying, "When fire and water, wind and dust, mingle, the old tired earth is refreshed;" and, "The longest night has its dawning." The brave woman goes further still. She appears before Sâm to plead with him at the head of his army, and with no slight effect. Manoshcihr is shocked at the intermixture of creeds, and sends Sâm against Cabulistan with a host whose tread shakes the whole earth, and whose martial movement is described by Firdûsî in a passage which is like Chaucer at his best. But the old man cannot face his son's reproachful reminder that he is but repeating the injustice done him in infancy, and both heart and conscience are moved. There is one resort. It is to send Zâl himself to make his own impression by pleading his cause with the Shâh, armed with a letter in which Sâm details his own services, describes his free life in the saddle as a throne, and commends the strength and devotion, which has now all passed into this young hero, to the king's mercy, with prayers and vows. By his noble presence, his skill in answering difficult questions concerning all subjects of physical and moral and religious interest, in a grand tournament of the seers, and by the foresight of his great destiny on the part of the priests, the prejudices of the monarch are overcome, and he consents to the marriage. Whereupon follow festivities that make men ask if the resurrection has not come. The long hates of races and beliefs are dissolved in love. But the significant fact is that the hero's own presence and power determine his fate, and cut the knot of circumstances that could not otherwise be loosed.

Such was the parentage of Rustem, mightiest among

the mighty, — a champion whose glory was not to strangle hydras in his cradle, nor to be dipped in a weapon-proof bath by his mother, like the demigods of Greece, but to be nursed by the heroism of a love which had conquered the prejudices of race and creed. The arm that should crush the foes of Iran was prepared for its work by an inherited nobility of soul capable of recognizing and loving nobleness under whatever disguise.

We cannot trace the long-spun web of tragedy, portrayed by the delight of the legend in its favorite hero through centuries, without sense of the lapse of time. We hasten to the tale of the last and heaviest debt paid by this epic redeemer to the limitations of man and the irony of fate. The tale of Rustem and Sohrâb is the crucial point of Oriental feeling. Firdûsî opens it with an admonition:

"The tale of Sohrâb will fill your eyes with tears, and stir you against Rustem. But do you blame the autumn wind when it strips the unripe orange from its bough? Death comes to all, nor was the mystery ever solved, nor ever will it be for thee; for none return from that gate. Do not wonder that fire burns while fuel is given; or that an old root bears stems. It is vain to murmur at the universal law. Hast thou kept thy soul from evil, thou shalt not fear the last hour. Act well thy part on earth, and blessedness shall meet thee beyond."

With this serene reconciliation to death as the natural law, opens the story of a whelming catastrophe, which everything that human folly and wisdom could do, seemed but to render the more inevitable. It is followed by the picture, in the same lofty strain, of the close of Rustem's great career, — a sacrifice to deeds of villanous and unnatural hate.

Sohrâb is the child of Rustem's passion for the daughter of a Turanian king, who seeks him out with the offering of her admiration for his heroic deeds, the unasked boon of a heart " never before unveiled to man." Return-

ing to Iran, Rustem is unknown to the boy, who grows up in his father's image, worshipping this unseen ideal through his mother's praises, and longing to behold his face. He is named Sohrâb from his ever gladsome looks, — the young lion of the mingled blood of Iran and Turan, irresistible in strength. He forms the plan to invade Iran, and give the throne to his father, forgetting that Rustem, as the loyal servant of his king, must himself first be overthrown. Upon the march the adventures of the young hero are many and marvellous; and the terror of his approach startles Kai Kâus, the king of Iran, into sending in all speed to Rustem, bidding him haste to the rescue, "stopping not to finish the word on his lips or to smell the rose in his hand." Rustem's delay leads to a quarrel with the Shâh, in which the free spirit of the Pehlevân, and his sensitiveness to unjust suspicion, are brought into full play. The quarrel is appeased, and Rustem advances to meet the Turanians. Henceforward the overruling sweep of Destiny appears at every step. Rustem becomes a spy and slays a Turanian chief, becoming thereby specially obnoxious to Sohrâb, who, of course, does not recognize his person. Looking out on the Iranian army, Sohrâb inquires the names of the chiefs; but Hedshîr, a prisoner, who informs him, conceals the fact that Rustem is among them, and gives the colossal form another name. Rustem, he says, is in Seistan, at a feast of roses, — foolishly hoping by this deception to prevent a collision, which, of course, could only be avoided, not by petty lies, but by his knowing the truth. The poet asks, —

"Why seekest thou, O Man, the steps of fate to lead?
'T will have its way with thee. 'T is thine to turn
Thy heart away from fleeting things, their care and pain."

Sohrâb cannot believe that one like Rustem can be away in the hour of his country's peril, and threatens Hedshîr

with death as a deceiver. But the prisoner, fearing he may kill Rustem and conquer Iran, ventures to brave it out, and holds to the falsehood, though Sohrâb strikes him to the earth. The battle follows. Moved perhaps by some blind presentiment, Rustem tarries in his tent. But presentiments and precautions alike fail. Excited by the deeds of the unknown Turanian champion, Rustem at last rushes to meet him. Then an access of pity holds his hand, and he cries, "O tender youth, the earth is cold, the air is sweet. I who am old have slain hosts with my arm. I cannot bear to kill thee, thou art so noble. Come, join Iran, and be our friend." "Thou art Rustem," exclaims Sohrâb. But again destiny thwarts the natural instincts, and Rustem denies his own name. "I am but his slave!" Dreadful necessity, where two souls are unconsciously at one, yet their arms in mortal conflict, their wills forced by sternest illusion to the bitter end! "Alas," mourns the poet, "every beast knows its place; man only, in cruel war, cannot discern a son from a foeman." Rustem had been over-confident. He had parted with much of his strength, thinking it a burden, and now he is flung to the earth, escaping with his life only by demanding of Sohrâb a second trial, after which the loser must die. Less willing than ever to confess his name to his antagonist, he returns to his tent, and prays that his old strength may be restored to him. The prayer is granted; and Sohrâb in turn is hurled to the earth and fatally wounded. And now, too late, the dying youth speaks mournfully of Rustem as his father, whom he should never see, though taught by his mother's praises to honor him as the greatest of men, and led forth into Iran only by the longing to see his face. We hear the agonized cry of the old man, "I am Rustem." And Sohrâb cannot hold back his terrible sense of wrong: "Art thou Rustem, who hast plunged the sword without mercy in my breast? I sought to move thee to peace,

but no love could rise in thee. See this onyx, which my mother bound upon my arm to give to thee, for it is thine. Ah! too late, too late! The father must slay his child." Then Sohrâb tenderly tries to stay the raving of grief. It is in vain. What help is there in self-destruction? "Remember that what has come could not be turned aside. But now bid the king of Iran cease from the war, which I alone have caused; and Turan has trusted only in me. For I believed we should conquer; how could I have thought to die by my father's hand? So was it written in heaven. I came as the lightning comes, and I pass away like the wind. O Father, in heaven thy child shall meet thee again!"

The poem follows step by step the agony of Rustem, and his unavailing efforts to save the fast-fleeting life. He appeals to the king for a potent balsam, which Kai Kâus, with cowardly jealousy, refuses. "Never," says the messenger, "did this king pay a friend his dues, nor lift a heavy-laden soul." The sufferer digs the grave of his son with his own hands, seeking for himself only death; yet pardons the deceitful Hedshîr, whose falsehood had brought all the woe. The chiefs vainly try to console him, and the whole land resounds with mourning as he bears his heavy burden to its shrine of sandal-wood in far Cabulistan. Of all the scenes which attend the dreadful calamity, none is more touching than the barbaric grief of the mother, Tahmîne. She kisses his armor, and wets his crown with tears. She presses his horse to her bosom, and lays her head upon his hoofs. She closes her palace gates, gives all she has to the poor, and dies of sorrow within a year. There is no remedy in this visible world for wounds so deadly. The heroic age of mighty instincts confesses this, pouring out wails over the hopeless cruelty of fortune and the vanity of the world. Yet we note that there is a robust faith behind the despair; for Rustem

lives, in spite of his whelming woes, to do heroic work in this world. The religiousness of the poet, casting Rustem for consolation on the future life alone, is manifest injustice to the very ideal which his materials afford. An heroic age may naturally fail to interpret itself to a reflective age through its forms of speech, which spring from the emotions alone. But the language of deeds is universal; and to see the nobler elements of character struggling forth in this form through the terrible obstacles of a semi-barbarous state of society, is far more interesting than to study the most unexceptionable doctrine, which ages of civilization have brought to didactic perfection to serve as the creed of a positive religion, and made the factitious aureole of its founder.

The dealing of a tragic Nemesis with breaches of the natural relations is again illustrated in the story of Gushtâsp and Isfendiyâr, in which the part of Rustem is again intensely interesting, and by far the most noble. This story belongs to a later period of the epic narrative, and shows signs of an ecclesiastical influence not visible in the more purely heroic portions that precede it. For Gushtâsp is the ruler whose reign is associated in the legend with the advent of Zoroaster, and the conversion of Iran to his religion. Even here, in its treatment of this ideal of the Church, the broadly human element of the heroic epos counteracts in great degree the narrowing effects of organized religion.

Gushtâsp has repeatedly promised to bestow the throne on his son Isfendiyâr, on condition of his performing well-nigh impossible feats for the glory and safety of Iran, and as often the promise has remained unfulfilled. The seven adventures of the young hero in capturing the famous Brazen Fortress remind us of the labors of Hercules, and perhaps like them have an astronomical origin. They raise him to the summit of glory, but do not secure their earthly reward. Gushtâsp now bids him undertake a harder

task; no less than to bring Rustem in chains to his court, that the old Pehlevân's pride may be humbled, and submit itself to the will of a king. For Rustem has dared to say before his face that he is no man's subject, and wears an older crown than that of a Shâhân-shâh. Isfendiyâr shall break this pride, and then the crown shall be his. The prince sees clearly that the aim is to put his expectations out of the way, if not his life, and the outrage to be perpetrated offends everything noble within him. Yet he undertakes it, as he says, out of pure filial duty. "Keep the crown if you will; a father's bidding shall be done, though it bring the judgment day." "If a bad ending come to this, 't is the power of fate." He is not without hope that the hero will consent to be led in fetters, out of loyalty to the Shâh; and so, by admonitions to the duty of a subject, and praises of Gushtâsp as the patron of the faith and head of the priesthood, as well as by promises of protection and reward, the foolish youth would fain persuade him to an act of servility and shame. Quite as aggravating is the charge of neglecting court attendance to one conscious of being the strong arm that protected the court itself. His reply is noble: "I will give you everything in my power, but do not dishonor the gift by personal outrage. I will appear before the Shâh, and do him homage. But the Dîv must have taken away your senses, if you imagine that I will consent to the indignity of wearing chains." Isfendiyâr is moved, but not sufficiently to throw up the shameful office. He even adds the insult of neglecting to send for Rustem to a banquet, — after promising to do so, — upon the worse than frivolous excuse that they are likely to meet afterwards as foes. Rustem, however, goes without being sent for, but is treated with indignity again, and receives the insulting apology, "that the day was hot and the way long!" Isfendiyâr, in a conceited speech, reproves him for his infidelity and partial

descent from a Dîv, which rouses Rustem to recount his exploits. Isfendiyâr does the same, laying special stress on his services to the true faith in destroying idols; and Rustem retorts with reflections on Gushtâsp's character and record. In all this, Isfendiyâr's conduct shows poorly beside his opponent's; but so the trouble deepens, rivalry is aroused, and the fates have decreed conflict between them. To Rustem the situation is terrible, since to submit would be intolerable, and to kill Isfendiyâr is equally dreadful to so noble a nature. The heroes part at the tent door with bitter words. Isfendiyâr's nearest friend warns him not to persevere. "Ahriman has taken you in his net." Zâl, on the other hand, forebodes his son's death. It is characteristic of Rustem that he forms a plan to overpower Isfendiyâr by main strength, then save his life, and give him the atoning service of love.

But this generous hope is foiled. The issue of the combat is doubtful. Isfendiyâr seems to have, in this half-priestly legend, a special aid and protection in strife from his orthodox commission. A quarrel arising between the followers of the two chiefs results in the death of Isfendiyâr's sons. Rustem is roused to indignation at his men; but his promise to atone in every way possible is received by Isfendiyâr ungraciously. Then Rustem cries, "My trust is in God," and renews the fight. But Isfendiyâr's arrows all take effect, while Rustem's glance off from the body of the child of the Holy Law. So Rustem withdraws, sorely wounded, for the night, and Isfendiyâr leaves the field to mourn his bitter loss. "Ye noble ones, now so pale, where is the soul that was here? I see but clay." Then he sends to his unrelenting father, "Behold the fruit of the tree you have planted." And to his friend, recovering his calmness, he says, "Cease to mourn. And why should more blood be shed? To death we all go, young and old, and only wisdom can lead us on our way."

Meantime Zâl for his son's sake burns the Sîmurgh's feather, and the great bird appears, bringing Nature's healing to his wounds. He shall find an elm by the sea-shore, and cut an arrow from its wood, and with this only, Isfendiyâr can be slain. But whoso slays this sacred life shall never more know peace; and even beyond the grave shall he find pain. But Rustem braves the condition for the sake of the victory so necessary to his honor. "Good name, at least, will I leave behind me." It is time for him also to resort to occult aids, since his foe has so manifestly a charmed life. The fate of Isfendiyâr now in his hands, Rustem beseeches him, by all they both hold sacred, — "by sun and moon and Zerdusht's fire, and the God to whom we pray," — to abandon his monstrous demand, and warns him that he will be slain. Isfendiyâr ridicules the prediction, and the fatal arrow, shot with tears, does its work. To his lamenting friends, the hero finds consolation in having led men on the path of the true faith, and that he dies, not by the strength of Rustem, but by the sorceries of Zâl. On the other hand, Rustem, made self-reproachful by success, confesses that the Dîv has caught him in his net, with all his endeavors to be true to manly dealing. "Would that I had been the slain! Alas, that I resorted to secret arts! The glory of my name is gone forever!" It is now Isfendiyâr's turn to show a noble spirit. "I blame neither you nor the bird. This is my father's doing, that he might keep his throne." He commits his son to Rustem's charge, to be reared in knightly virtues and honorable toils, and to stand as his father's seed in a line of kings. And Rustem reverently promising, the noble reconciliation is complete.

Isfendiyâr is now his father's Nemesis. "Your desire is accomplished; your throne is yours, and I have the chambers of death. God shall decide between us at the last day." And so, with tender entreaties sent to his mother

and sisters not to weep too much for him, nor uncover his face, but wait for reunion beyond death, Isfendiyâr passes from the scene. Bashûtan takes home the body, through mourning Iran, to a court not unaffected by natural grief and shame.

Then rises the indignant protest of Iranian freedom. The chiefs renounce respect for their king, and cry as one man: "O wretched man, thou sentest him to Cabul that this might be! May shame weigh down thy crown, and vengeance never let thee go!" Bashûtan refuses to bend before the throne, and thunders: "Thou blind and selfish man! the wrath of Heaven shall fall on thee, who hast sent thine own son to death, with heart harder than stone!" Isfendiyâr's sisters recount their brother's virtues, and ask what king before has sought to slay his own flesh. If Isfendiyâr desired the throne, did not Gushtâsp himself drench the world in blood to obtain the crown of Lohrasp? Even thee thy father sought not to kill, but took away thy diadem. But thou hast given away thy child for such a bauble!" The Shâh has no word of anger or defence, but bids Bashûtan comfort the mourners.

"Softly, O Mother, he sleeps in everlasting peace, glad to be free of earthly woes."

This last scene, in which the Pehlevâns are avengers and smite the cruel king without fear, is politically one of the most suggestive in the whole epic.

The Oriental theory that the king is the father of his people makes him responsible to a standard of personal character to which the equally patriarchal habit of absolute filial servitude should naturally be subordinate. And while for the most part in the Eastern practice this royal *patria potestas* has been, as we have found in India and China, as well as in certain stages of old European civilization, limited in certain ways by tradition, custom, posi-

tive institution, or religious prestige, there is another force, to which it is even more accountable; namely, the ideal of personal heroism. This has been the natural rival of autocratic institutions, even under their harshest form.

It is the chief emancipator from that absolutism which the earliest social traditions secured to the father of a family. The resistance of women and children to this kind of despotism forms a leading trait in the legends of most ancient nations. Military service was almost the only force which effectually diminished the *patria potestas* in early Roman times, giving, as it alone did, the right of private ownership (*peculium castrense*) to the son. But nowhere did the rights of personality derive such furtherance from the heroic element as in the Iranian family, pictured in the Shâh-Nâmeh. We have seen in the story of Isfendiyâr the warning against passive obedience to parental tyranny, even when enforced by royal claims. That of Siâvaksh, on the other hand, relates the martyrdom of a prince who refused such obedience for the sake of his own honor and truth. A nobler assertion of the higher law of self-respect was never made in tragedy or song.

Siâvaksh, like Iraj, whose history his fate recalls, is the mirror of gentleness, purity, and valor, — the Sir Galahad, as Rustem is, in some respects, the Sir Tristram, of our epic. Forced against his will to visit the harem, and charged by one of the queens with criminal conduct, in revenge for his refusal to gratify her passion, he is proved innocent by ordeal, and put in command of the army on its march into Turan. Afrâsiyâb, the king of that country, alarmed by dreams presaging that Siâvaksh will be his destroyer, hastens to offer terms to the invader, to which Siâvaksh agrees, in hopes to spare the effusion of blood. The treaty is guaranteed on Afrâsiyâb's part by a hundred hostages of his own kindred, who are sent into the Iranian camp. King Kai Kâus, informed of the good news, is

enraged, and commands his son to break the treaty, ravage Turan, and send the hostages to court to be slain. Siâvaksh prefers to disobey his father rather than violate his word, and makes haste to send home the hostages safely to Turan. "Above the sun and moon stands the will of a greater King. Before Him the lion is as the blade of grass. Shall I madly rise against Him, and bathe these two lands again in blood?" The hostages shall say to Afrâsiyâb: "This treaty has brought me to grief; but I will not break my oath to save my throne. The world is my throne, and God my refuge. As I cannot return to Iran, I ask of Afrâsiyâb leave to pass through his dominions and find rest from this bitter strife."

The effect of this integrity on the Turanians may be imagined. It is to the honor of the epic that it recognizes the nobler instincts of the heart as human, not as the prerogative of the famed race or religion. No personage so moves our sympathy in suffering as Pîrân, the chief counsellor of Afrâsiyâb. He advises the king to receive Siâvaksh with open arms. "No prince on earth compares with him in body or soul. They tell me that to see him is to love him. It were fit thou shouldst honor him if he had but given up his crown to keep his faith." Afrâsiyâb fears "what the young lion may do when his teeth are grown;" but Pîrân persuades him to write a cordial invitation to the young exile. This letter shows not only that the Turanians are regarded as having the same religious sentiment as Iran, but that even Afrâsiyâb, the evil genius of the epos, is capable of meeting a noble action in a noble way. "Praise be to the Eternal, whom the heart can feel, though none can measure Him. God spare thee such a journey. Stay with me, I will give thee castles and men." So Siâvaksh writes sorrowfully and tenderly to his father: "I have walked through fire and wept blood; I have made peace, but my father's heart is like steel towards

me. May he live happy, though I fall into the lion's jaws. I know not what fate awaits me, but I can no longer remain with him." In Pîrân he finds a second father, as tender as the other was harsh; the old man's youth is renewed as they walk together, while Siâvaksh sighs as he remembers his own childhood and Iran. The meeting with Afrâsiyâb is equally affectionate. "Ended is the world-ravaging war. Now thanks to thee, O youth, that panther and lamb shall feed together, for the world is wearied of strife." He cannot sleep for thinking on this lovely guest. But the courtiers are envious, and the joy of the hour is clouded with evil-boding. Pîrân, on his part, does not rest till he has Siâvaksh married to the daughter of Afrâsiyâb, and a beautiful city, full of gardens, statues, and all delights, rises amidst perpetual summer as their home. A son is predicted, who shall unite the hostile crowns. Love has dissolved the hates of nations and creeds.

But Pîrân finds sad presentiments in the heart of his favorite, and the astrologers confirm his fears. In spite of Pîrân's encouragement, the vision of war and desolation is before his eyes, and the near approach of death. A Turanian chief, the king's brother, who hates Siâvaksh for his noble qualities and his success, by villanous falsehoods contrives to fill Afrâsiyâb's mind with suspicion, and Siâvaksh is doomed to destruction. Fully aware of his coming fate, the prince sends his wife to Pîrân, with tender farewells, destroys his palace, and goes to meet Afrâsiyâb's army, on the way to Iran. His little band of followers make no resistance to their enemies, yet are slain; and he falls, sorely wounded, into the hands of the king of Turan. Afrâsiyâb is dissuaded from his fell purpose for the moment by his own army, and contents himself with throwing the wife of Siâvaksh, his own daughter, into prison, for pleading in her husband's behalf. But Siâ-

vaksh does not escape; he is murdered by Garsêvaz in the wilderness, where a purple flower springs from his blood and is called by his name.

The murderer is cursed by all men. Pîrân has the courage to rebuke Afrâsiyâb, and takes Feringîs to his own home. In due time Kai Khosrû is born, the child of grief and the star of promise. Afrâsiyâb seeks his destruction, but is persuaded by Pîrân to consent to his being brought up by peasants, in ignorance of his real origin. But his royal qualities — as those of Krishṇa, Buddha, Iskander, and the Jesus of the Apocryphal Gospels — can be hidden by no outward conditions; and at his demand Pîrân is forced to reveal the secret.[1] Over Afrâsiyâb, too, the youth exerts such a charm that the past shall be buried. The cautious Pîrân suggests that Afrâsiyâb need not fear the fulfilment of his dreams, since the boy is but half-witted. Khosrû personates a fool, and a promise in the name of all that is sacred is exacted from the king that he shall not be harmed. He is sent to the city of Siâvaksh, to be reared amidst the memories of his father's life and death:

"For Siâvaksh the very beasts of the wilderness mourn; the nightingale in the cypress bewails his fate; and every leaf, as after the autumn blast, hangs withering from the pomegranate tree."

But Rustem rushes to Kai Kâus, eager to avenge the deed, as well as to rebuke the unnatural father: —

"O evil one, thy sowing has borne its fruit. Better thou wert in thy grave. Who was so pure, so noble as this prince? Alas! his head, his face, his mighty limbs, the joy of all eyes! The tracks of his feet were blest!"

Then before the king's eyes he kills that wicked queen, to whom he traces the calamity; while Kai Kâus dares not lift his head for shame.

These legends, of which it is more to my purpose to give the outlines than to indulge in extended quotation, fairly

[1] The old messianic legend of all religions.

illustrate what I should designate as the religion of the Shâh-Nâmeh in its relation with personal freedom. Constantly the higher law of honor, sacrifice, love, and truth, asserts itself against the authority traditionally vested in the throne, as well as in the priesthood. Heroism is the true divinity, the practical ruler. Heroic Iran, like Homeric Greece, of which it was the Aryan prototype,[1] is deeply conscious of the rights of the personal will as against mighty obstacles, physical and moral. In the epos, these are embodied for the free-souled Pehlevân in the tyrannical and unjust will of his king as much as in the enmity of his peers. Never does any noble passion, least of all moral indignation, fail to speak its full protest for fear of irresponsible power.

When Kai Kâus breaks into rage against Rustem for delaying to answer his summons, Gêv asks in astonishment, "Darest thou lift thy hand against Rustem?" "To the block with him!" screams the king. And Rustem cries out: "It is I that am the lion among men. Let the Shâh turn pale before my anger. I owe my strength to God, not to the Shâh. My steed is my throne, the world my page, the helm my crown; and this arm shall defy kings. No slave am I; to God alone is my service pledged. I have not chosen to be a king, but to follow my duty and my right." Thereupon he rides off from court, and when the king sends to entreat him to return, he replies hotly, "What is Kai Kâus to me? A handful of dust." Finally, the Shâh must ask pardon, and "strews dust upon his tongue."

The scene is curious enough when we contrast it with the common conception of the court of an Oriental despot, or even with the Mahometan ideal, which Firdûsî would

[1] It must be remembered that the state of society represented by Firdûsî is in no sense Mahometan, but everywhere in the epic betrays itself as very much earlier, and resting on what may be a pre-Homeric basis.

have given us, had he drawn his materials from his own age. This fearlessness of the Pehlevân before his king is all the more remarkable, because combined with profoundest reverence for the idea of loyalty to the throne. It seems to hint of creditable elements even in the most servile formalities of Eastern obeisance. Full as these are of apparent man-worship, we find them here combined with an independence such as few modern republicans would dare to show before the popular will, or even the party majority.

When Zâl comes into the presence of Kai Kâus, to advise him against his wild scheme of invading Mazanderan, it is with measured step, and hands crossed as in prayer; yet he does not hesitate to warn him boldly of the dangers of his ungoverned will. Rustem himself, who spurns the arrogant Kai Kâus, is humble as a servant before the truly royal Kai Khosrû, and springs to obey his command to rescue an imprisoned knight. "He bends his head and invokes blessings on the Shâh, whom all greet as sovereign, whose feet are on the heads of kings." The just and humane ruler is obeyed with enthusiasm; the unjust one has forfeited all title to his respect. He can assume the part of a Mentor to the young king Tûs, and bids him "slay the rebellious, but dry the tears of the submissive, as a father. Be ever true; for life is short, and the world passes away. Even Jemshîd fell, the greatest of kings."

This right to reserve obedience till it is consistent with self-respect, through the real majesty of the person who claims it, is even more strikingly illustrated in Tûs, the banner-bearer of Iran, a spleeny, ambitious, and passionate Pehlevân, who regards his own line of descent as of incomparable grandeur. Kai Khosrû has been brought from Turan amidst the acclamations of the people, and all the roads are fragrant with spices and radiant with festive

colors, and old Kai Kâus makes atonement to the son for casting off his father, with tears and embraces before his peers. Tûs alone holds aloof from the new star, insisting that the succession belongs to Ferîborz, the Shâh's son, instead of his grandson; and braving the indignation of the whole court by his jealous pride. But when he sees Khosrû, his prejudice gives way, and he submits at once to an inborn right to rule. This is not all. Kai Kâus himself so far yields to Tûs's protest as to consent to give the throne to whichever of the two princes should take the enchanted castle of Bahmen. Ferîborz, aided by Tûs, fails; but Khosrû, in Semitic style, makes the walls of this Iranian Jericho drop down at the name of God, and the very Dîvs fall in thousands amidst clouds, thunder, and earthquake; then enters in the blaze of day, and lights the holy Zerdusht fire. This has a priestly look; but the fall of Tûs's pride before the nobleness of Khosrû did not need the added sanction of the Church to produce the reconciliation that follows and makes Iran one and happy.

The same responsibility of kings to the heroic ideal, in whomsoever embodied, runs through the epos, even down to the end of the great Sassanide age. Of these higher claims of magnanimity, justice, and truth, every Pehlevân is the minister. The true line of kings begins in Ferîdûn, "who never saw a wrong or a desolation but he bound it with the chains of virtue, as became a king." This is the "Book of Kings," and it is written to dispense a poetic justice to the doings of kings. The rights of personal will, in their highest and apparently unlimited form, are here affirmed to be duties, and all history is declared to be the evidence. The probe goes deeper than conformity to tradition or law: it strikes to the quick of motive. It is dealing with the moral quality of actions, not with their form, however specious. The mythopoetic imagination

has here constructed the whole history of a people for ages, upon the sway of justice, — laws of retribution above the will of kings.

Thus the plan of Kai Kâus to wrest the beautiful land of Mazanderan from the wicked Dîvs of Ahriman might have seemed a service to the faith; but it is denounced and punished as a mad scheme, because it is undertaken out of the mere love of conquest; and because, thinking its loveliness existed merely for his own gratification, he masacres its people without mercy. The penalty was for the army to be smitten with blindness, and nearly starved in the wilderness, — a supernatural one, it is true, but inflicted by evil powers, not by the wrath of God.

Afrâsiyâb, the incarnation of Turanian hostility and guile, has many generous qualities; his counsellor, Pîrân, is a very noble person, whose advice he frequently follows; his procedure against the innocent Siâvaksh is palliated in some measure by the panic into which he has been thrown by presageful dreams. But none of these things are permitted to justify even a king in the murder of so noble and beautiful a guest, and the tree of wrong bears fruit after its kind. Rustem hears of Siâvaksh's death, sits awhile overwhelmed with grief, then like a fury descends upon Turan. "Woe to Turan! Let the land be swept with vengeance, as Gihon bursts its banks!" Afrâsiyâb sees his son slain, and escapes, after terrible loss, to the distant provinces, where, driven from place to place, he at last puts himself into the power of a holy man, Hom, evidently the Holy Word,[1] who takes him in a net; and Khosrû is at hand to slay him, along with the actual murderer of Siâvaksh, and poetic justice is satisfied.

On the other hand, the ideal king is found in Khosrû,

[1] The details of this hunt and capture of Afrâsiâb, as related in the Shâh-Nâmeh, abound in traits and objects taken from the old Avestan mythology, which we cannot here pause to recount. See Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, i. 653, 654.

born in suffering, brought up in exile, sought out by heroes with manifold toils and perils, and brought in flight to his repentant grandfather Kai Kâus, to receive the crown that his father deserved. Some details of the story are doubtless taken from traditions of Cyrus. But the theory that the two are one rests largely on the common mould in which the religious legend has always cast the early lives of messiahs. Kai Khosrû is the ideal of legend, the Cyrus of history. Siâvaksh, the idolized martyr, seems to all Iran to have risen from the grave in Khosrû. He is not only the flower of heroism, but the soul of piety and patriotism. He swears, at his grandfather's command, to give no rest to Afrâsiyâb, and then spends the night in prayer, with face turned to the holy fire. He is represented as covering the Avesta with pieces of gold; yet this is previous to the coming of Zerdusht! His liberality is profuse. He offers great prizes in dresses, servants, and lands to such as shall accomplish certain achievements in the holy war, the greatest being to bring him Afrâsiyâb's crown. This curious custom is nowhere else mentioned in the Shâh-Nâmeh, but is evidently regarded as the climax of royal generosity. Khosrû is described as barbarically adorned with jewels, and throned upon an elephant, holding the old bull's head mace of the Iranian kings. Princes sit in the dust around him. He drops a golden ball into a cup, the image of Jemshîd's world-goblet. The earth shakes with martial music and the tread of hosts, as the nations march before him, and he blesses their chiefs as they pass by. He also gives them counsel at intervals, and sometimes proves himself as profound a moralist and as devout a theist as any Mahometan Sufi.[1] The homily to Ferâmorz shows what the epos regards as the basis of royal authority.

[1] It is manifest that Firdûsî has in some degree islamized his hero; but, on the whole, these discourses are in accord with the rest of the epos, and substantially of native quality.

"Show thyself worthy thy noble birth. Never spur thy horse against the harmless, nor harm them in thine anger. Be ever protector of the poor and consoler of thy people. Never say 'to-morrow.' Flee strife, and trouble none that hurt thee not. Seek not fleeting riches. Build not on the vanity of the world, which now is red, now black. The time hastens on when thou shalt rest in death; be careful that thy heart accuses thee not, and that thou go hence in peace. God numbers thy breaths. Keep soul and body in cheerfulness, and strive for the true end. So may the Creator keep thee, and cover thy foes with dust."

To old Rustem he says, in like manner, but with more regard to the fighting man's animal instincts, mingling an epicurean love of wine and pleasure with the philosophy of resignation to the swift lapse of life and the passage of all human grandeur: —

"Wise is he who thinks not of the morrow. Life is given for joy. Where now are Ferîdûn and Selm and Tûr? Gone! and their tracks vanished in dust. Why long for treasures, instead of tasting life's joys. Our last treasure is the inevitable grave. Let the night be glad with wine, till morning dawns, and Tûs awakes us with call to arms. Man strives and struggles, but all has such issue as Heaven foreordains; joy and sorrow alike go over our heads, and whoso complains thereof is without sense. If God stands by me, I will avenge my father's death."

It is a curious mixture of Islam and Iran. The stormy passion for physical stimulus is natural enough, but fate and foreordination do not properly belong to the Iranian mind. Yet the combination is by no means impossible, and contempt for treasures that can be laid up on earth well becomes the hero who is forever facing death.

The chiefs are commanded to wage war humanely: —

"Ravage not the land on the march, nor harm the peaceable and industrious. Be merciful towards the unarmed, for short is rest in this earthly dwelling."

Khosrû punishes offenders with a lofty justice that is recognized by all. Dying warriors ask of Fate only this,

to see Kai Khosrû once before they die. He gratefully remembers the virtues of Pîrân, and his protecting care, mourning that at last he so turned against Iran that he must needs be slain; and treating his body not as a foeman's, but embalming it, and seating it on a throne in armor, in the resting-place of kings. He is himself magnanimous, pardoning the Turanian foe as soon as he pleads for mercy. After a hard-won victory, he chivalrously protects the wives of Afrâsiyâb, listening with softened heart as they plead against his merited anger. His speech to the soldiers is beyond the Mahometanism of Firdûsî's day, and the poet seems to have caught it from some great fountain of wisdom and mercy, from which he drew through all that portion of his work which covers the Sassanian time: —

> "All Turan, as well as Iran, will be your home. Cast away then every thought of revenge, and make the land happy by your mercy; for the people are stricken with fear. I give you the wealth of Turan, and ask only this in return. Try to do right. As you have felt the winter, carry with you the spring. It is unworthy of you to strike the fallen. Turn your eyes from lust. Respect property. So shall enemies turn to friends. He who would please me, must abstain from desolating the land, and call him who does so accursed."

The close of Khosrû's reign betrays the hand of Islam. As perfect king, in himself and by contrast with Kai Kâus before and Gushtâsp after him, he must crown his life by renouncing the world, of which he has seen all the glory and the vanity, and receive that celestial reward which puts earthly thrones to shame. Reflecting that he might easily fall like Jemshîd, remembering his mixed blood, content to have accomplished justice on his father's murderers, and to have made himself the terror of infidels and evil-doers, Khosrû secludes himself in his palace to prepare for his withdrawal by solitude and prayer. This contempt of the visible world, so utterly opposed to Persian traditions, naturally enough excites the alarm

of his whole court; and the chiefs, through the aged Zâl, entreat him not to abandon his public duties, clearly intimating that his conduct looks like possession by Ahriman. But no explanation is given them, except a desire to obtain the peace of God and a place in Paradise. A dream, in which the Persian Saviour Sosyosh plays the extraordinary part of summoning him to divide his goods among the poor and prepare to enter the everlasting light out of this dark world, confirms his purpose. The most remarkable feature of this exalted mood is his homily to the peers, who return from fierce war with Turan to hear themselves exhorted not to weep for his departure, "since all must die, and every one cries out to the Creator, when he has grown old and weary, 'Take me to thy rest!'" He will pray for them, and they must spend seven days in joy. Of course they believe him mad. Then he tells old Gûdarz to pour balsam into wounds; to spend, not hoard; to build the hospice and rebuild fallen towns; to console the afflicted; to keep the holy fire burning. Gifts of provinces and fiefs are lavished on the best. "Tell me now what else ye need, for the shepherd is to leave his sheep." He appoints his successor, who is unwillingly yet loyally received, and takes tender leave of his family. Then, accompanied by the people in procession, he sets out for a distant mountain; but before reaching it, dismisses all but three Pehlevâns, who refuse to leave him, and who, in fulfilment of his warning, are buried in a snow-storm, during which he is taken up to heaven, while they sleep their last sleep.

Such for the epos is the reward of ideal royalty: to escape the evil hand of disease, old age, and common death; to be translated by its own will to divine abodes. And such the power possessed by the true king to bring his whole people to sacrifice all their interests to satisfy his sense of a divine duty. The mixture of Mahometan

pietism with Iranian heroism here is not easy to analyze; but the main fact shown is, that the Iranians had an ideal of royal virtue which was more to them than the mere person of a king; and that the Pehlevân who could allow a Khosrû to give up the whole State at the command of his convictions, would also resist a Kâus to his face, like Rustem; or, like Bêzhan, rebuke a Gushtâsp for cruel treachery towards his own son.

But the ideal king or hero does not so well illustrate the genius of the time and people as the real central figure of the epic action, who embodies alike the merits and the faults of the civilization, the positive conflict of good and evil that its conditions require. Rustem is a creature of mighty instincts, which are dowered with the strength of a hundred men. He is the child of the fierce strife between Iran and Turan, but combines with its passions a chivalrous humanity hardly compatible with them from the modern point of view. At drinking and club-swinging even Iblîs cannot compete with him. After a boastful drinking-bout with seven chiefs on a hunting-party, he rises up from Zabul wine to defeat Afrâsiyâb's host, and then spares the fallen, and scorns to rob the dead. Dîv or dragon, thirst or cold, are as unable to cope with his purely human strength as are the warriors of Turan, when he goes, all alone, to free the spell-bound army of the reckless King Kâus in Mazanderan; but he is so tender-hearted that he does not fail to pray for them all, "because though all sinners in God's sight they are nevertheless His children." His talk is fresh with natural emotion, and there are few pictures in the epic so charming as his interview with a beautiful youth on the borders of a stream, ending in unbounded surprise and joy when this charmer reveals himself as the young Kai Kobâd, the true prince whom he had come from Iran to seek, and bring back to the throne of his fathers. His merciless revenge for Siâ-

vaksh upon the son of Afrâsiyâb, reaching even to the mutilation of his remains, when the youth had actually pleaded for his life on the strength of his love for the martyred prince, is as barbarous as Achilles' wrath against Hector. For when he confronts Pîlsem, Afrâsiyâb's brother, doing wonders in the battle, he pities him, and sighs that so much manliness must die so young. His similar pity for Sohrâb, and his terrible agony of grief and madness when he finds he has slain his own son, have already been described. When Bêzhan is found to have been inveigled into the power of Afrâsiyâb by Gurgîn, his envious companion, and Rustem is going alone to deliver him, and the whole court is anxious and indignant, demanding the punishment of the offender, Rustem pleads for his forgiveness, "because he has repented, and if he be now cast from grace, his spirit will be broken." We have seen how superior Rustem is in moral manhood to the champion of the faith, Isfendiyâr, in refusing, at his demand, to soil his noble fame with even the outward pretence of bondage. So the difference between Rustem's seven adventures or labors in delivering Kai Kâus from Mazanderan and the seven feats of Isfendiyâr in taking the Brazen Fortress, is greatly to the advantage of Rustem, both in regard to motive and detail. He goes alone, without a word of direction or a hand of help, through perils of which he has no foreknowledge. Isfendiyâr goes with an army, learns from a prisoner of war what he is to meet, accomplishes his object by deception, and ends by barbarously massacring his foes. Rustem acts from spontaneous desire to save his countrymen and his king. Isfendiyâr acts partly from unquestioning obedience to his father's command, indeed, but with the ulterior hope of acquiring the crown.

In every great national peril, Rustem holds the fate of Iran in his hands, and seems to have a permanent commission from her guardian gods to save her, lasting

through many generations of mortal men. This vast responsibility, with the personal self-abnegation it involves, gives his whole life the highest ethical interest, maintained as it is both by the terrible fatalities of the circumstances by which he is continually tortured and finally slain, and by the lofty courage with which in spirit he meets and conquers them, while subject to them in the flesh and in the affections. This mighty struggle of solitary human strength against overwhelming necessity for a whole epic period is essential tragedy. His exposure to the intolerable rancor and caprice of Kai Kâus, the prodigious odds against him in the strife he must wage against enemies visible and invisible, the anguish of discovering that he has killed his own child in unnatural fight, the attempt of Gushtâsp to outrage his honor and humiliate him in his old age before the court, and the insulting conduct of Isfendiyâr, constitute a series of adversities unsurpassed in heroic legend; and in no case does he sink below the level of his conviction and self-respect. That in the conflict forced on him by Isfendiyâr he should be obliged to accept the terrible condition, that if he should slay the champion of orthodoxy he must expect no relief from pain here or hereafter, lifts Rustem to the position of a martyr to the right of protest against ecclesiastical pretensions to rule the fate of the soul. The same honor was foreshadowed in his mixed blood, and in the reputation of his family and province, for non-conformity. In that part of the Shâh-Nâmeh tradition which relates to the closing events of his career, and which has marks of priestly interference, Rustem bears the burden of infidelity; yet even here the nobler impartiality of the national tradition in large measure overcomes the evident purpose of Firdûsî to take the orthodox side. As we have already said, the old Iranian mythology, heroic rather than technically religious, looks not at the creed but at the manhood of its Pehlevâns, who

are all of more or less Turanic blood. Rustem everywhere represents this breadth of spiritual sympathy, and is quick to be reconciled with his bitterest foes; as where he so readily accepts the charge of Isfendiyâr's son, confided to him by the dying prince from whose terrible arrows he had just escaped. And at last, in the successful plot of his enemies to lure him on to his destruction, his generous confidence is their main reliance for accomplishing the crime.

Rustem is great enough to see life as a whole, and to find the solution for its ironies, wrongs, and failures, in renouncing the self-indulgence of ease, and in living for the law of duty. Of course, this statement must be interpreted in accordance with the age and the race in which the character was mythically conceived and developed. But whatever Firdûsî has added to the simple traditions of a heroic age is but the self-conscious rendering of instincts really existing in that age, and determining the conduct of its typical men. The spectacle of a battle-field where dead heroes are strewn like wrecks, draws from him this philosophy, which, as instinct, is thoroughly natural: —

> "Regard the world from whatsoever point, you will see grief, anxiety, and pain. The ever-turning wheel brings sometimes strife and poison, sometimes the sweetness of love. But whether we die in one way or another, let us not be troubled about the why or how; but depart when our time comes, regardless of the turns of fate. Be the God of victory our trust, and perish the fortune of our foes."

But a more lofty place is reached in his unselfish service of his country. He is without ambition to make himself prominent, or to claim the reward he could so easily exact. He is the Washington or Cincinnatus of old Iran; and when he has saved her life, he more than once avoids the ovations prepared for him, and modestly begs leave to withdraw to his loved Seistan and the ancestral house. "O

King! thou art full of goodness, but I long to behold the face of Zâl."

With Rustem and Zâl ends the heroic race of Seistan, — Titans of Nature and freedom, paladins of an earlier chivalry, foreshadowing at once the Arab sheikh, the knights of Arthur's Round Table, and the demigods of Scandinavia and Greece, as well as a class of ardent and powerful leaders in all times; combining acceptance of inevitable things like death with robust faith in valor and freedom, and keen instincts for this world's savors and bodily delights. Firdûsî's portraits are touched with the color of Islam, but their forms and features are essentially old Persian. He has made the legend read its own lesson, how sorrow and death have their will at last, with all this courage and passion, this strength before which the earth trembles and demons flee; and how the sense of immortality is identified with heroic doing and suffering in this earthly life. These lessons of all ages are nowhere more distinctly or more pathetically pronounced than in the Shâh-Nâmeh.

The story of Pîrân represents the tragedy of a situation in which the penalties of a bad cause fall on the good men who are in some way forced to serve it. We see the wise, thoughtful, brave, and humane counsellor of Afrâsiyâb striving all his life loyally to serve his king, in a broad and noble spirit ill suited to the task. The story of his love and protecting care for the exiled Siâvaksh and for his son Kai Khosrû, which we have already given in outline, is a picture of surpassing moral beauty. But neither Firdûsî nor the Iranian chiefs render his conduct the admiration it deserved. Firdûsî, in fact, ascribes to him a certain insincerity, where the interest of his cause was concerned, which seems to be nothing more than justifiable reticence towards the enemy of his country. His appeal to Rustem, against the continuance of the barbarous

war of Iran and Turan, is certainly very noble. Rustem replies with the warmest testimony to his rectitude, but offers only impracticable conditions of peace, one of which is that Pîrân himself shall come over to the Iranian side, with the promise of great reward. Pîrân sees that the demands cannot be agreed to, but will carry them to Afrâsiyâb. In the council of war they are rejected, and Pirân, positively refusing on his own part to forsake his king and country, though their ruin seemed certain, returns to the Iranian camp with the irritating decision, to be met with violent reproaches. Firdûsî seems to echo these, and says that Pîrân retired with his lips full of lies and his head of plans of revenge. But surely the old chief's indignation at being asked to turn traitor was creditable; and as for the lies, we are not told what they were nor what was their motive. On another occasion the same proposals are made to Pîrân by Gudarz, another Pehlevân; and again the hero refuses either to give up Afrâsiyâb's nearest relatives to be punished with death, or to leave the service of his king. His proposal to spare human life by reducing the war to a single duel is denounced by Gudarz with unfeeling contempt; yet the Iranians are by and by glad to accept a similar one, — that of a fight between twelve champions on each side, thus justifying Pîrân's judgment.

Even Afrâsiyâb turns against his faithful counsellor, and the heavy burden of a lost cause falls upon the head of the best among its supporters. He is oppressed by forebodings, and sees the setting of his own sun. In every duel the Iranians are victorious, and Pîrân falls under the spear of Gudarz, who savagely drinks his blood in revenge for Siâvaksh, — the last refinement of irony, since Pîrân was the exile's one saviour and friend. In their touching lament over his dead body, his brothers dwell on the sadness of his destiny, recalling the old saying,

"No burial shall he have, nor grave-clothes; and his bleeding body shall be carried about by his foes." "All is over with him, and the wind has swept all his labor away." Even Kai Khosrû, who owes to him his throne and his life, condemns him for sacrificing everything to his love for Afrâsiyâb. The poet also utters over him this mournful plaint: —

> "So false and treacherous is the course of things, mixing rise with fall.
> The wise man sees with pain how Fate promises and fulfils not."

The religion of the Shâh-Nâmeh is purely monotheistic. Retaining the fire-symbol, the Amesha-çpentas, and Çraosha, yet very inconspicuously, it treats Ahriman, not as co-equal with the supremely good spirit, but merely as the power of evil in human conduct; so that he appears as the name of any man who is on the wrong side. We have not Ahriman, the devil, as God, but men who are "Ahrimans," or "devils." In fact, the personal Ahriman had long given way to a more intensely exclusive power than Ormuzd, and was lost in the God of Islam. But this Semitic worship is inspired by the heroic traditions of Iran and humanized by the personal qualities of the great Pehlevâns of the epos. Firdûsî's views of life, fortune, destiny, and the future life were Mahometan; but there was no escaping the free, democratic, self-asserting, this-world spirit of the legend with which he had to deal. The reign of Gushtâsp, indeed, introduces a new element into the legend itself, — the hand of Zoroastrian orthodoxy. Down to that period the poem knows no impassable religious line between Iran and Turan. The prayers and vows of Afrâsiyâb cannot be distinguished, either in form or substance, from those of Rustem or Kai Khosrû. Iran has no monopoly of virtue or of piety. The impartiality of the heroic stand-point is complete. But with the

advent of Zerdusht, in the days of Gushtâsp, it is otherwise. Lohrasp, his successor, a scion of a new race, is noted only for building a national altar for the reformed faith, and for transferring the court to Balkh, conformably to the traditions which ascribe the origin of Zoroastrianism to eastern Iran. Firdûsî celebrates Zerdusht as "a tree reaching to heaven, with deep roots and many branches; its fruit wisdom, its leaves knowledge; who is fed by it shall never die." "The tracks of his feet were blessed." He brings a vase of fire from paradise to Iran's king, bidding him accept God the creator, and the true religion, and Gushtâsp obeys. He plants a cypress, on whose bark he writes the creed, with the ancient history of Iran, and surrounds it with palace walls. Wherein this creed differed from the old theism of the Pehlevâns for a thousand years does not appear, except that the epos itself becomes narrower in its sympathies, as if under the influence of a positive Zoroastrian Church, seeking to impose itself on the freer theism of the princedoms of Iran and Turan. The myths no longer rise to the old universality and freedom. They are in the interest of Zoroaster. The war with Turan becomes a family religious war. The Prophet even appears in old age at court, and forbids tribute to the Turks, who in turn denounce Iran for falling away from the faith into superstition. This surprising turn in the spirit of the epos corresponds with an equally unexplained change in the political relations of the two peoples. The mastery over Turan, gained by Kai Khosrû at such cost, and apparently so decisive, has disappeared, and in its place is a long-recognized right of Turan to demand tribute of his successors. Gushtâsp, the political founder of orthodoxy, has the old rôle of a national redeemer, to be driven off by his father into exile, and to return master of the situation and be crowned as the true king; but his glory, of course, fades in the brighter star

who succeeds him. Isfendiyâr, subjected to the same persecution and peril in his youth, learns his high function through suffering, and becomes the champion of the Church, despatched to convert the world and punish the noble old heretic of Seistan.

But we have seen that even during this period the ecclesiastical spirit is so strongly antagonized by the heroic element, that in spite of the poet's apparent sympathy it really plays an ignoble and inferior part. And it is soon succeeded by new epical constituents, — Semitic, Egyptian, Greek, — in which we find the same predominance of the heroic over the technically religious.

It is for the life of world-famous Iskander that Firdûsî begins to draw on other than native sources. Queen Humâi rules wisely, and her child Dârâb is a new ideal for the mythologists. He is put through the conventional process of exposure to death, wonderful deliverance, and final ascension to his destined throne in spite of every obstacle. Cast into the Euphrates in a chest, he is rescued, and brought up in ignorance of his birth till the time comes to take his crown. He marries the daughter of Philikûs, king of Rûm, and Iskander is their child. He, too, is supplanted by Dârâ, a younger half-brother, and must resort to invasion to secure his rights. The story of Rustem and Isfendiyâr finds an echo in that of the Iranian King Dârâ (Darius), defeated and assassinated, but before his death reconciled with Iskander, to whose care he commends his children. Thus Iran legitimates Alexander's conquest, and claims him as her own. The epos makes him confirm all the liberties of Iranian feudalism, modify the harem by abandoning forced supplies of women, and generously maintain all Sufis, or holy men, besides prohibiting injustice generally. From this point the epos continues on the large track of universal ethics and religion. In the new and in many respects peculiar

instance of Iskander, Firdûsî still holds to the supreme significance of heroism, which belongs to the Iranian consciousness, though much of his material is drawn from the Græco-Egyptian pseudonymic romance of Callisthenes. Alexander's infancy, accession, and achievements are constructed on the conventional mythic mould, to show that wrong and suffering can only testify to the sovereignty of justice in human events. But after acquiring the throne which had been unjustly given to another, Iskander endures no more suffering, either from his own sins or those of other men. He is all-victorious, as he is all-noble. But none the less necessary is it that he should learn the conditions of mortal existence, the folly of extravagant desires, the vanity of self-exaltation, the sovereignty of Fate, and find freedom only in accepting the supreme order of the world. East, West, North, and South yield to his victorious arms. Yet the emphasis falls after all upon solitary personal experiences, whose meanings are conveyed miraculously to his senses, as in parables, lessons of moral wisdom, symbols of truth and duty, prophetic intimations of death from Nature and from man. And so the epos, which had been purely heroic, becomes with Iskander distinctly ethical and didactic.

His personality is overwhelming. In the disguise of a messenger from Iskander he goes fearlessly into hostile camps and courts; but as his superiority to his playfellows betrayed him in his childhood to be the destined king, so nothing can hide his majesty when masquerading in these maturer functions. "Go free," says the Arabian queen to the seeming envoy who is astonishing her court, "for the very dust of the earth knows that thou art thyself Iskander." Yet around this world-master gather the mysterious intimations of a law higher than his own will, of the transiency of human pride and human praise. The legend makes Iskander great enough to feel these rebukes,

and to see the plane where king and subject are equal. The Brahmans tell him that desire is the hell of his soul, and the essence of punishment. His cheeks blanch and eyes fill with tears, and he goes away silent. In Habesh a voice speaks to him from a dead king on a throne of gold, saying, —

"Thou hast destroyed many thrones and lifted thy head to heaven; but the time of thine own departure is come." "His face becomes crimson, and he departs with a wound at his heart."

Following a sage far away into the sunset of the deep, and beyond an immeasurable city, he pursues the fount of immortality. But in the dark he loses his guide. The sage finds what he seeks, but the king fails. Then the generosity and devoutness of an unbeliever, Faghfûr the emperor of China, puts the great conqueror to shame, teaching him that true religion forbids the doing of evil to any, and that a true gift, however bounteous, is given, not as service to any earthly king, but to God. The angel Isrâfîl, the speaking birds, the field of riches that it is as dangerous to leave as to take, the omens of coming death, admonish the world-master that self-indulgence is foolish and vain. Finally, reason and philosophy have their good work in him, through Aristâlîs (Aristotle), who dissuades him from the Oriental policy of putting to death by treachery all living members of the royal family of Iran (Kaiânides) who might afterwards revolt against his dynasty. The philosopher conjures him to do injury to none of these princes, but rather, by generous treatment, to turn every one into a bulwark of his throne; and Iskander is man enough to consent. When he dies, his obsequies are performed by sages who moralize on the lessons of his life in the spirit of the old Bible text: "I have said, ye are Gods; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." The poet's comment is this: —

"Iskander is gone, and lives only in men's words. He slew thirty-six kings: see what remains in his hands! He built ten fair cities, which now are deserts; he aspired to what none else had achieved; East and West repeat his story, — and there is the whole. Behold, the word [of God] is best; never shall it, like these old palaces, be the prey of winds and rains."

Ignoring the foreign dynasties which succeeded Alexander, the epos reopens with Ardeshîr Bâbegân, the restorer of the faith. This national saviour, like the other heroic ideals, begins his career in obscurity, and reaches the throne by his own resistless will. His reign is conceived in the same ethical and didactic spirit as that of Iskander. Through the whole Sassanide period the kings are preachers, and deliver long addresses or exhortations in a high moral strain to their nobles or their children. The proverbial lore of these ages seems to have been treasured up in the form of homilies, and ascribed by the nation as by its epic bard to the kings of the great race of Sâssân. To these, even heroic achievements are secondary. We might fancy ourselves fallen on a line of Stoic kings. Ardeshîr's person, however, is of the old Pehlevân type, — "beautiful as the sun, a lion in fight and a Venus in feasts." His youthful feat of mastering the fortunes that went with the possession of a mysterious worm found by a damsel in an apple, and by whose spinning a peasant's family became a mighty empire, is doubtless a mythic version of Iranian relations with the land of silk; and the hero's device of entering the castle of this famous guardian worm in guise of a merchant simply follows the model of earlier heroic legends. These stories are a curious opening of the Sassanide portion of the epos, and seem to show that Firdûsî must have confined himself faithfully to the older materials before him, since he would hardly have invented such a porch as this to the grandest period of the national life.

Ardeshîr ascends the throne of Gushtâsp with the proclamation that his "empire is justice, and that he is the asylum of mankind, the open audience-chamber for all." But as the older heroes were mighty in deeds, so is Ardeshîr in moral wisdom; and he includes the whole religious law in practical duties.

"Rich is he who is content: do thou resist cupidity, and hate strife. Be not anxious about the future, nor mortified at the past; nor mix in affairs not thy own. Regulate thy heart by God's commands. Resist deceit. Honor the king as your life; but if the king does not protect you against oppression, his royalty abandons him. May my subjects be happy by my justice."

To his son Shapûr he thus discourses of true kinghood:

"A throne may be overturned in three ways, — if the king is unjust; if he favors unworthy persons; if he hoards his wealth. The means of the cultivator are the riches of the kingdom. It is the king's business to see that they bring him fruit. Have courage to shut thine eyes to sins committed against thee. When the king is angry, the wise man finds him of little worth. Fear not to be generous. Do not play at wine and feasting, but remember the excitement of wine exhausts the body. Speak not overmuch, and make no show of your virtue; listen to all, and remember the best. Make not friends thoughtlessly. Treat not the poor with contempt when he seeks you. Put not a bad man on the throne. Pardon the penitent, and avenge not the past. Be a providence to all men. In five hundred years your descendants will have gone over to Ahriman, and the land will be a desert. May God protect, and all good men aid you!"

The right of revolution against kings, and their responsibility to the laws of personal and private duty, as here set forth in precepts, are in entire accord with the spirit of the older legends of Kai Kâus, Gushtâsp, and other arbitrary monarchs.

The legendary story of Bahrâm-gûr, a king who shares with Nûshirvân the worship of all later Iranian tradition, is here in point. Yezdegerd, "the Wicked," maltreats his son Bahrâm, and sends him to Arabia, where he is educated

by the king of Yemen and his sage. Conceited, presumptuous, and cruel, Yezdegerd conceives himself in no need of Divine aid; and his death by the kick of a horse is set down as a judgment on his sins, which perhaps really consisted in some offence to the priestly class. Many of the nobles claim the crown, but all unite at last in placing Khosrû, a good old man, on the throne, and the army sustains their action. Bahrâm, returning from Arabia, appeals to the chiefs, who, after discussion, agree to choose a king out of a hundred persons, of whom Bahrâm is one. In opposition to the direct line of Yezdegerd, the mutilated victims of his cruelty are brought out to prevent the election of Bahrâm; who, indeed, finally persuades the assembly to select him, but not till he has promised to do justly, and has shown his heroic qualities by fighting a lion. Then Khosrû himself salutes him; he gives his adhesion to the law of Zoroaster, remits arrears of taxes, and the land is filled with joy.

On this free choice of the local chieftains follows an ideal reign. The king discovers the hidden treasure of Jemshîd, but refuses to keep it, on the ground that the king should receive only what is earned by justice and the sword, and orders its distribution among the poor: —

> "Why take the fruits of the toil of dead kings? Why open my heart to the greed of gold? I am not bound to this fleeting world. My throne and my head deserve curses, whenever one of my subjects can complain of my injustice."

The legend delights in making Bahrâm a kind of royal providence moving about among the people in disguise, righting wrongs, bestowing treasures heaped up by fraud, on deserving poor or otherwise unfortunate persons. For a season falling into luxurious ease and self-indulgence, he is roused by an invasion to instant self-recovery. And when he discovers that his indiscriminate bounties caused

mischief in many ways between the rich and poor, he seeks out wiser methods. Such measures as abolishing taxation, and importing Indian jugglers to amuse the people, may or may not have been improvements; but his moral homilies are of the most liberal and lofty tenor, and during his reign Iran was, we are assured from other sources, an asylum of all persecuted faiths. Christians, Gnostics, Manichæans, Buddhists, Jews, all mingled in the religious and political ferment, which was prevented from overturning the monarchy by the stringent hand of the Zoroastrian Church. The narrowness and intolerance of this institution, as we know it in history, hardly comports with the noble precepts placed by epic tradition in the mouths of nearly all the Sassanide kings. But these precepts are still less in harmony with the autocratic faith of Islam, or with the fatalism of the Koran. They are probably, as Mohl suggests, and as their simple and often primitive character shows, really the remains of old Persian wisdom, treasured up in or before the days of Nûshirvân.[1] We shall soon see how powerful was the influence of this national literature on the spirit of Islam itself and the sects that sprung from its bosom.

It is suggestive of a Persian rather than of a Mahometan origin of these ethical sayings, that the people are brought strongly into view as murmuring against the luxury of the rich, and complaining of their own disadvantages. It was upon feelings of this sort that the communist Mazdak wrought with such effect that he came near overturning the social order of Iran. The king, Kobâd, became his convert, and the palace was beset by crowds of malcontents. Bahrâm, finding the treasury empty in consequence of these disorders, abandons the throne in discouragement, hopeless of the evil world. He is succeeded nominally by Kobâd, but really by Mazdak, whose eloquence and

[1] Mohl, vi. v.

ambition raised him to the office of treasurer, where he readily took advantage of the destitution prevailing among the people, to overturn the existing social order. "What shall be done," he asks the king, pointedly, "with one who refuses to heal one bitten by a serpent, with a remedy which he held in his hand? How much more should he be punished who holds back bread from starving men!" Armed with the very natural replies to these questions, Mazdak proceeds to break down property rights, and to consign all things to communistic pillage. He is said to have distinctly proclaimed equality of property and community of wives. This doctrine so flourished, says the epic, that no one dared oppose it. Prince Khosrû, afterwards Nûshirvân, however, with other important persons, looking more deeply into the situation, found it wisest to put the reformer to death.

But the strongest proof that the ethics of heroism, not the interests of a priesthood, have prescribed the contents of the Shâh-Nâmeh to the very last, and consequently that Firdûsî has really refrained in the main from reading into the old traditions of Iran the spirit of a later and very different religion, is found in the figure[1] of the grand vizier of Nûshirvân, *Buzurjmihr*. He is the intellectual and political paragon, who confounds the Mobads on their own ground, and teaches the wisest of kings the arts of government and self-discipline. Finally, by conquering the extremity of injustice with unyielding fortitude, he proves the personal soul greater than kings, and virtue the real master of the world. Even as a youth he interprets dreams and asks and answers knotty problems with irresistible authority. His homilies reach the pith of the moral ideal, maintain the rights of reason, and inculcate generous and noble treatment of others as simple justice. It is not easy to find a purer and more humane spirit than

[1] Wholly mythical, says Nöldeke, *Tabarî*, p. 251.

that of these sentences. This Oriental Boëthius discourses thus: —

"Keep far from sin; treat all men as thyself; remove alike from thyself and thy enemy all that thou dost not approve. If thou hast rectitude in thy thought, thou wilt do no evil. A bad action is a tree that bears evil fruit. If thou wouldst do no evil, weigh well thy words. Never, O King, permit divorce between thy reason and thy heart. It is reason that gives serenity, and delivers from evil in both worlds. But 't is a poor spirit which says, 'None equals me in knowledge.'"

"Teach your child to write [and what depends on it]. It is the most honorable of arts, and reinstates one who has fallen."

By this the sage seems to refer to the usefulness of this art in affairs of State; for he goes on to show how important it is to the scribe to know how to adapt himself to the feelings of rulers. It is part of his wisdom, of course, to teach obedience and devotion to the king. Yet, as events proved, this meant with him the old patriotic loyalty which was part of the heroic ideal, not a tame, passive obedience. We shall see what his philosophy meant by freedom.

The attachment of Nûshirvân to his vizier is shown by seven grand festive conferences, in which the latter stands to be questioned on all subtle problems, and gives oracular replies. Much of this proverbial lore is commonplace enough, but its quality is as good as that of other collections of a similar kind, and was doubtless the storehouse of Persian political idealism for many generations. It has much of the tenderness of Marcus Aurelius, and not a little of the severity of Epictetus: —

"Two things never die, only two, — words that are sweet, and words that are good: they never grow old. Happy he who has shame [self-respect] and virtue. Do nothing, O King, of which your soul will be ashamed! Do no evil to men, but help them; this is the law of religion."

"Who is the happy man? He who follows not Ahriman to sin. Who, though mean of rank, is the great man? He who is most wise and capable of governing his passions. Who is wise? He who quits

not the way of God to follow the evil spirit. To have wisdom is to be filled with hope, and to see only good in the world; to choose the straight, not the crooked way. The servant of God will not turn from the divine commandment to avoid suffering, to gain treasure, or to please any one. For no price will he barter the way of God. Neither serenity nor wisdom goes with evil actions. Is it better to have high birth, or instruction? It is better to have instruction. It is the ornament of the soul. For birth, little can be said. Without merit, it is a sad thing and feeble. Only by discipline is the spirit strong. A right-minded laborer is not contemptible to the wise; and all riches are loss to men of evil mind. The true friend is he who varies not, who wounds you not, nor fears to suffer for you. What is that which lasts forever? — A benefit. What the most splendid ornament of humanity? — The spirit of the wise, who controls his desires. What is greater than heaven? — A king with an open hand and a worshipper's heart. What the heaviest thing? — Sin. What does all mankind condemn? — A gross king, who harries the innocent; a rich man who refuses himself clothes and company; a shameless woman; a precipitate man; a poor man who pretends to be mighty."

Here is a catechism which might well supplant the dogmatic creeds.

The loyalty and heroism of this great counsellor was put to the severest test by Nûshirvân himself. Even this great king was not proof against the temptations of irresponsible power. Buzurjmihr, suspected of theft, falls into disgrace; and then, replying with becoming dignity to the charge, that he too had a throne higher than the king's in every respect, is imprisoned in a cave, and no more heard from. Tired of waiting in vain for apologies, Nûshirvân sends to know how he bore his punishment, and is answered that his "days are happier than the king's." Further severities bring the same response. Threatened at last with death, the hero replies that for him to leave a painful existence is easy, but it is the king whose heart can be terrified by death. This brings royalty to its senses, and the vizier comes out of his prison a conqueror, to resume his function of interpreting things too

dark for kings or Mobads to solve. Here is greatness of another sort than Isfendiyâr's or even Rustem's. Yet it belongs to the evolution of similar qualities of will. And in passing from the oldest to the latest portions of the Iranian epos we have not crossed any important border-line, either ethnic or ethical.

Nûshirvân himself, who seems to have done more towards collecting the materials for the epos than any other of the Sassanide kings, is enshrined there in a wisdom of his own. Firdûsî sings of conversations between the king and his Mobads, in which the latter play the part of disciples, and not of masters.

On one occasion the Grand Mobad said: "O King, the general-in-chief has raised three hundred thousand dirhems for us, which we put in thy treasury." Nûshirvân replied: "I desire no treasure obtained by inflicting pain. Let it be restored to those from whom he has taken it, and add what they need. Take down his palace and take away his office."

And here is the Golden Rule of religious freedom:

"The Mobad said, 'An infidel does not necessarily harm the king. Every intelligent man must know that.' Nûshirvân replies: 'I have myself said the same thing, and the believers have heard it from my lips. The world is in no part without religion, though some prefer one faith and some another; one worships idols, another the true God. But none thinks that evil speaking is better than benediction. The world does not go to ruin for words. Say thou always what thou thinkest in thy heart. Yet if the king himself has not true belief, who shall draw benedictions on the world? Faith and kingship are soul and body.'"

"He who takes care for his reason, O Mobads, cares for his life. All I have learned seems only to pay my debt to my soul and my reason. See that reason guards you against your faults, for it is more precious than a crown."

"Once the Mobads remind him that he has not spoken wise sentences for their instruction for a long time. 'I have spoken words enough,' he replies; 'it is on my actions that I must depend.'"

He counsels his son not to shed blood lightly, nor lightly go to war, and to render justice alike to great and small. This son, Hormazd, begins by undoing his father's good work, and making way with his ministers. But a letter written by Nûshirvân coming to his sight, in which his bad courses are predicted, with their sure penalty, he returns to right ways for a season. Not long afterwards his army, headed by Bahrâm, whose faithful service has been repaid with insulting suspicion, revolts; and we are introduced to one of those stirring debates of the Iranian chiefs which decided the fate of dynasties. The most striking feature of this debate is the appearance of Bahrâm's sister, who enters the meeting with the *élan* of a prophetess, and in an eloquent historical argument protests against her brother's assumption of the throne, as an outrage on the legitimate dynasty. To her replies a prince, who believes that the Kaiânides have had their day, a thousand years long, and that their line is practically extinct: "Let their names be pronounced no more. Shame on a king without faith!" The end is, that Gurdîya distinctly repudiates her brother's cause, while the chiefs almost unanimously drink wine to the glory of the new aspirant. Hormazd, in virtue of this revolution in the army, is dethroned and deprived of sight.

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